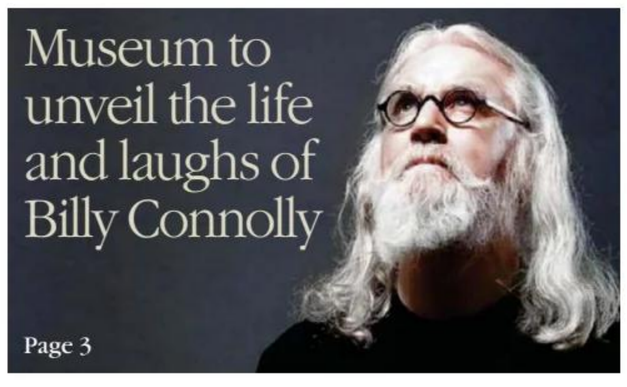

Museum to unveil the life and laughs of Billy Connolly

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Rangers and Hearts humbled as Motherwell takes stand with draw and Hibs clinch late winner

Sport

The trouble with our universities is that they took Jason Arday's LinkedIn-inspired 'journey' at face value

Marissa MacWhirter: Page 15

FRIDAY AUGUST 7, 2026

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Diageo to swing axe at distilleries in $1bn costs drive

Unions fear Scots jobs impact

Scott Wright
Deputy Business Editor

SCOTCH whisky giant Diageo has moved to slash operating costs by $1 billion over the next three years as part of a strategy that has put jobs on the line at distilleries in Scotland.

Chief executive Sir Dave Lewis, who earned the nickname "Drastic Dave" for his cost-cutting efforts in a previous role at consumer goods giant Unilever, is swinging the axe as the Johnnie Walker and Guinness maker continues to face challenges in the key US and Chinese markets.

Major distillers have in recent years experienced a downturn in demand amid a raft of macroeconomic and geopolitical headwinds, which followed a Covid-era boom in spirits sales.

Diageo had warned in February that its full-year sales would come in below expectations, citing the impact of fragile consumer confidence and tariffs, which were hitting its exports of Scotch whisky into the US.

Tariffs were also impacting exports of its spirits from Mexico and Canada into the US.

The company drafted in former Tesco boss Sir Dave following a difficult spell under

Market faces challenges

Debra Crew, to lead a turnaround and cut its dividend in half shortly after starting in post in February. Speculation has been mounting in recent weeks that a major drive to cut costs was imminent.

Diageo said the move to the revised operating framework, which involves "significant changes", will see it incur a cost of $0.8bn this year, with savings of $850 million realised over two years beginning in 2027.

A further $150m is expected to be saved from supply chain initiatives.

"These savings will allow us to invest in the turnaround without needing to reduce operating profit," Diageo said.

Investors appeared to approve the plan, with shares ending the day yesterday up nearly 6%, or 91.5p, at 1,732.5p.

The much-anticipated cost-cutting came after Diageo confirmed this week that 172 distillery roles in Scotland are at risk of redundancy under the plan to "redesign our operating framework".

Trade union leaders have criticised the move, warning over the potential impact on rural communities across Scotland.

GMB Scotland said the roles at risk are spread across key distilleries at locations in Speyside such as Cardhu, Cragganmore and Dufftown, and Port Ellen on Islay.

It noted that a four-week consultation period concluded last week without agreement on job losses or the redundancy process.

The cost-cutting drive was unveiled as Diageo reported a 27.2% fall in operating profit to $3.156bn for the year ended June 30, better than the City expected.

Net sales fell by 3% to $19.643bn as the company experienced continued weakness in the major markets of North America and Asia-Pacific, which offset growth in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. Profits in North America, including the

Continued on Page 6

ANALYSIS: 'Drastic Dave' lives up to reputation as costs slashed at Scotch whisky giant – P6

Tattoo's Call to Gather

More than 800 performers from Scotland and around the world will gather from today on the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade for The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo's 2026 show, A Call to Gather. The production will showcase music, military precision and cultural performance, with international acts joining Scotland's renowned military and traditional performers, led by the Royal Air Force. Now in its 75th year, the Tattoo continues to bring audiences together through a shared language of performance and cultural celebration
Picture: Connor Mollison

Scots arts bosses urge investment

Exclusive
Martin Williams

SCOTLAND'S top art bosses have urged ministers to recognise museums and galleries as drivers of jobs, tourism and economic growth while warning they face "significant" financial pressures.

National Galleries Scotland (NGS) says cultural institutions should be recognised as "core economic infrastructure" rather than "discretionary cultural spending", arguing they generate hundreds of millions of pounds for the economy every year while supporting thousands of jobs.

The plea comes as the organisation says it generates £253.3 million for Scotland's economy every year and delivers £11 of economic value for every

Continued on Page 5

National Gallery building

Funding uplift for festivals

Exclusive
Brian Ferguson

EDINBURGH'S festivals are poised to receive their first funding uplift from the city council in more than a decade, with officials backing a blanket 5% rise from 2027 to help tackle soaring costs.

Around £555,000 from the new visitor levy would be ringfenced for festivals and arts bodies whose support has been frozen or cut by Covid, inflation and global turmoil. While a long-promised overhaul of cultural funding is delayed, the council plans to combine the uplift with a £3 million innovation pot, opening support to new and heritage-focused projects.

Full story: Page 7

Tycoon Povlsen praised for 'exemplary' plans to transform Dores Inn at Loch Ness

A MAJOR renovation of a popular Loch Ness venue has been given the green light by Highland Council.

Dores Inn, owned by Danish billionaire Anders Holch Povlsen, is set to undergo a huge transformation after the council's south planning committee agreed to grant planning permission at a meeting yesterday.

The plans include the renovation and extension of the original 19th-century Dores Inn itself to form a new, larger "boomerang-shaped" building.

A 248 sqm Dores Beach Bakery has also been approved, featuring a café and shop, alongside public

The Dores Inn at Loch Ness

toilets and beach changing facilities within the same building plus an additional service building and boat kiosk, along with a new jetty extending out to the loch's famous waters.

The project also features extensive new car parking, a new road access from the B862, and a new/relocated football pitch and playpark area.

Councillors were very complimentary of the plans and how the billionaire engaged with the community during the development phase of the project.

Green councillor Chris Ballance (Aird and Loch Ness) said that despite some "eyebrows being raised" over some of Mr Povlsen's plans, the way in which he had conducted the community engagement for the project was "exemplary".

Although Labour councillor Andrew MacKintosh (Inverness Ness-side) agreed with his colleagues about the benefit of the plans – and pointed out there are currently some "scabby bits" around the Inn – he hoped the popular caravan tourist shop that currently sits on the site would still be able to operate.

Aviemore-based developer WildLand group said gaining council approval is an "important first step" in restoring the site.

Director of built development Joe Dunn added: "Dores Inn and the surrounding landscape have a distinctive character and are valued by many people.

"We will now work through the planning conditions and prepare carefully for the next stage."

Lavinia Turner, head of region at WildLand, said: "We are very grateful to the local community, Dores and Essich Community Council and everyone who gave their time, shared their knowledge of the area and helped us understand what matters most to them about Dores Inn and its unique setting.

"That feedback has helped shape the plans, and our commitment to listening does not end with planning approval. We will continue to work with the community."

Training concerns

Row over university nursing course

Exclusive
Hannah Brown

A SPECIALIST programme from Edinburgh Napier University used to train neonatal nurses has been branded "unacceptable for Scotland" in a paper prepared for the country's maternity and neonatal taskforce, The Herald can reveal.

The document records concerns about the university's decision to proceed with a "largely online" course while reducing the clinical practice element.

The online-learning programme is listed to begin in September, placing fresh scrutiny on the qualification weeks before the new intake.

The concern also comes amid wider warnings over

Continued on Page 4

SNP writes off value of motorhome

THE SNP has finally wiped the infamous £100,000 motorhome linked to disgraced ex-chief executive Peter Murrell from its books, drawing a line under one of the most ridiculed symbols of Operation Branchform.

The campervan – once billed as a pandemic campaign tool but used instead for motorhome holidays – has now been written off in the party's latest accounts, even as auditors flag ongoing fraud risks and note an unresolved £60,000 loan still owed to Murrell.

Full story: Page 2

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IT IS The Herald's policy to correct errors as soon as we can and all corrections and clarifications will usually appear on this page.

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2022 was 53%.

New chapter for Borders town as bookshop approved for Old Mission Hall

BOOKWORMS are in for a treat after a new chapter was given leave to open in a Borders town.

Scottish Borders Council has approved an application for the change of use of the Old Mission Hall in Bourtree Terrace to a venue called The Old Curiosity Bookshop.

The second-hand book-store actually opened its doors and started trading in March of this year before formal planning approval for the conversion was agreed.

The aim is to use the ground floor of the building as a bookshop and the upstairs as a cultural venue, where occasional talks and meetings are held.

The applicant, Tina Louise Gayle, moved to Hawick from the East Midlands to launch the venture.

Two objections to the application were made by neighbours, who cited issues such as fire safety, increased traffic and insufficient parking spaces.

The applicant responded to the concerns, addressing the fire risk by stating: "Fire risk is minimal, you can set fire to a piece of paper, but a book needs a temperature of 451 Fahrenheit to burn so it would need an incendiary bomb to start a fire in there. I have two exit points, fire doors, and plenty of fire extinguishers. The biggest fire risk is the kettle!"

In a statement in support of the application she also stated: "I have purchased a house and this business premises and live in Hawick as a Council Tax payer and shopper.

"I am the only second-hand bookshop in the Borders and will bring visitors to the town centre who will buy lunches and bring other revenue to the High Street.

"It is by nature a quiet business, no noise, bright lights, or any social problems. Book buyers are mostly older, educated and quiet people.

"I provide a free bookcase in the hallway for people without the money to buy a book, to give back to the community."

Moor aftermath

A firefighter carries a hose across burnt moorland at Tintwistle Moor in Glossop, England. The major wildfire incident was officially stood down earlier this week after burning 606 hectares since June 24 Picture: Ryan Jenkinson/Getty

SNP writes off motorhome value

Craig Paton

THE SNP has written off the value of the motorhome bought by former chief executive Peter Murrell with party funds, from its accounts, the documents show.

The party's balance sheet, published yesterday by the Electoral Commission, shows the value of the £100,000 vehicle has been removed from its books.

Murrell – the estranged husband of former first minister Nicola Sturgeon – pled guilty to embezzling more than £400,000 from the SNP earlier this year and was sentenced to more than five years in prison.

During the long-running Operation Branchform police investigation which snared Murrell – and cleared Ms Sturgeon and former party treasurer Colin Beattie – the motorhome, which was parked at the Fife home of Murrell's mother, became an object of both scorn and ridicule.

Murrell bought motorhome

While it was initially claimed the vehicle would be used to campaign for the SNP during the pandemic, court records showed Murrell purchased a number of guides for motorhome holidays around the same time.

It also emerged in the accounts that Murrell is still owed £60,000 from a loan he gave the party in 2021.

The figure remains on the balance sheet, but the party says Murrell has not "formally requested" the sum back and it is unsure if it will have to be repaid.

A note in the accounts said: "There is no formal loan agreement in place, no interest is charged on the outstanding balance, and no specific repayment terms have been agreed.

"The former chief executive has not formally requested repayment of the outstanding balance.

"Due to the absence of agreed repayment terms and the lack of recent communication regarding settlement, there is uncertainty as to when, or if, this loan will be repaid to the former chief executive, and whether it may ultimately be waived or written off.

"This uncertainty regarding the future outflow of economic benefits from the party represents a significant judgment made by the party in assessing the nature of the liability and is disclosed to ensure the financial statements provide a true and fair view of the financial position."

A proceeds of crime hearing is expected to take place next month, with the party seeking "to recover from the guilty party the full amount embezzled", according to treasurer Peter Grant.

First Minister John Swinney said the accounts – which cover 2025 – show the "formidable financial strength" the party was in leading up to May's Holyrood election.

The SNP boasted a £509,903 surplus, compared to a near-£400,000 deficit the year before, largely driven by cuts to staffing following a 2024 redundancy push.

More than £1.7 million of the SNP's income last year came from membership fees, with the party saying it had 50,443 members at the end of June, down from the peak of more than 100,000 during Ms Sturgeon's time as leader and a further drop from the 56,011 since 2024.

Mr Swinney said on X: "The publication of the SNP's accounts today shows that at the end of 2025 the party was in a position of formidable financial strength, having made a surplus of more than £500,000 over the year.

"The rebuilding of the party's finances allowed us to run a well-resourced campaign that took our positive message to every community in Scotland and made a major contribution to our historic election victory."

Scottish Tory finance spokesman Craig Hoy said the accounts "raise further serious questions" for the SNP.

"The fact they still technically owe the crooked Peter Murrell £60,000 is astonishing and eyebrows will also be raised at auditors highlighting the party still has a heightened risk of fraud," he said.

"Their infamous campervan has now met its demise, having more than halved in value after being Murrell's most expensive criminal purchase.

"If even SNP supporters are losing faith, then it is time for Swinney to ditch his independence obsession and focus on what really matters to Scots."

WEATHER

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24 HOUR FORECAST

General situation: A low-pressure system from the Atlantic is bringing unsettled weather across Scotland, with heavy rain expected in the north-west. Winds will be strong and gusty, especially in exposed areas.

Outlook: Tomorrow, Scotland will experience widespread rain with a chilly breeze, making it feel cooler. By Sunday, conditions shift to cloudier skies, and the wind eases, offering a slightly milder atmosphere.

Glasgow area and southwest Scotland: A mild and breezy day with overcast skies dominates, as light rain falls intermittently. Max temp 16-17C (61-63F). Tonight, mild with overcast and rain. Min temp 11-12C (52-54F).

Edinburgh area and the Borders: Clouds dominate with occasional light rain, adding a breezy feel from the southwest. Despite the overcast skies, it feels pleasantly warm throughout. Max temp 17-18C (63-64F). Tonight, light rain with breezy winds. Min temp 11-12C (52-54F).

Fife and the Stirling, Perth and Dundee areas: Cloudy skies persist, with brief spells of light rain adding a damp touch. A breezy south-westerly wind accompanies the warm feel throughout the day. Max temp 16-17C (61-63F). Tonight, light rain, overcast, breezy. Min temp 11-12C (52-54F).

Argyll, Lochaber and the Inner Hebrides: A mild day marked by persistent rain and overcast skies, with a breezy south-westerly wind adding to the damp atmosphere. Max temp 14-15C (57-59F). Tonight, heavy rain and breezy. Min temp 11-12C (52-54F).

Central Highlands: A mild day with persistent rain expected, accompanied by overcast skies. Breezy south-westerly winds add to the day's damp character. Max temp 12-13C (54-55F). Tonight, mild with overnight rain. Min temp 10-11C (50-52F).

Aberdeen area and the Moray Firth: A mostly cloudy day with overcast skies and brief light rain, tempered by a warm feel. Breezy conditions prevail from the southwest throughout. Max temp 18-19C (64-66F). Tonight, breezy, overcast, drizzle. Min temp 12-13C (54-55F).

Northwest Highlands, Skye and Outer Hebrides: Persistent rain showers and overcast skies dominate the day, with a mild feel. Breezy south-westerly winds add to the unsettled conditions. Max temp 14-15C (57-59F). Tonight, heavy rain, breezy southwest. Min temp 9-10C (48-50F).

Caithness, Orkney and Shetland: A mild and breezy day with persistent light rain under overcast skies, as skies remain predominantly grey with limited breaks in the cloud cover. Max temp 14-15C (57-59F). Tonight, mild, breezy with rain. Min temp 11-12C (52-54F).

European forecast

Sunny spells are expected across much of Ireland, with mild temperatures. Some parts may experience light rain, particularly in the west and northwest. Coastal areas might see occasional gusts of wind, while southern regions remain mostly dry. Central areas could see early morning fog, clearing by midday, while eastern parts enjoy prolonged sunshine.

Glasgow readings

The following readings were recorded at Glasgow Airport for the 24hrs ending 6pm yesterday.

Min temp: 12C (54F); Max: 18C (64F); Sun (hrs): 5.1; Barom (mb) 6am: 1002.2; 6pm: –; Rainfall (ins): 0.00

Edinburgh readings

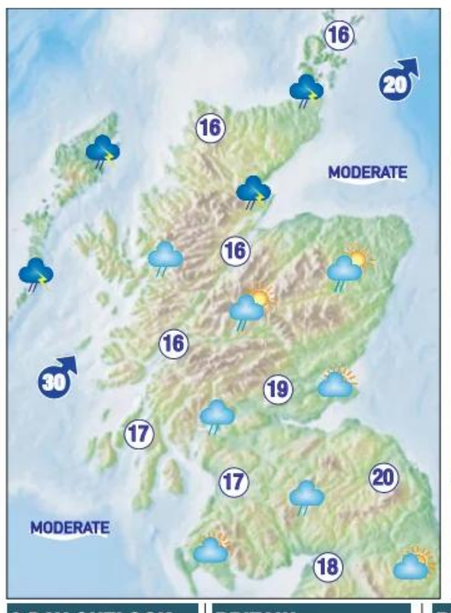
The following readings were recorded at Edinburgh Airport for the 24hrs ending 6pm yesterday.

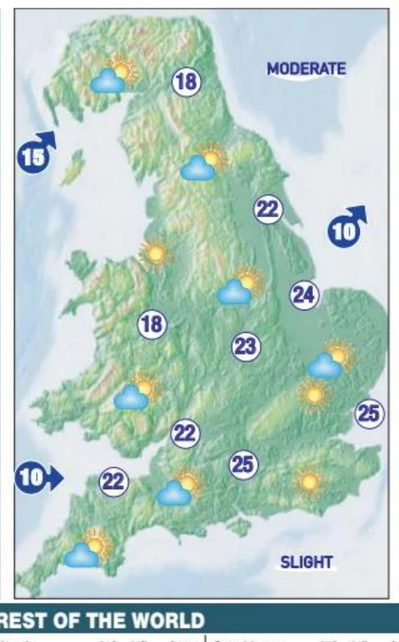
Min temp: 12C (54F); Max: 18C (64F); Sun (hrs): 2.6; Barom (mb) 6am: 996.8; 6pm: –; Rainfall (ins): 0.01

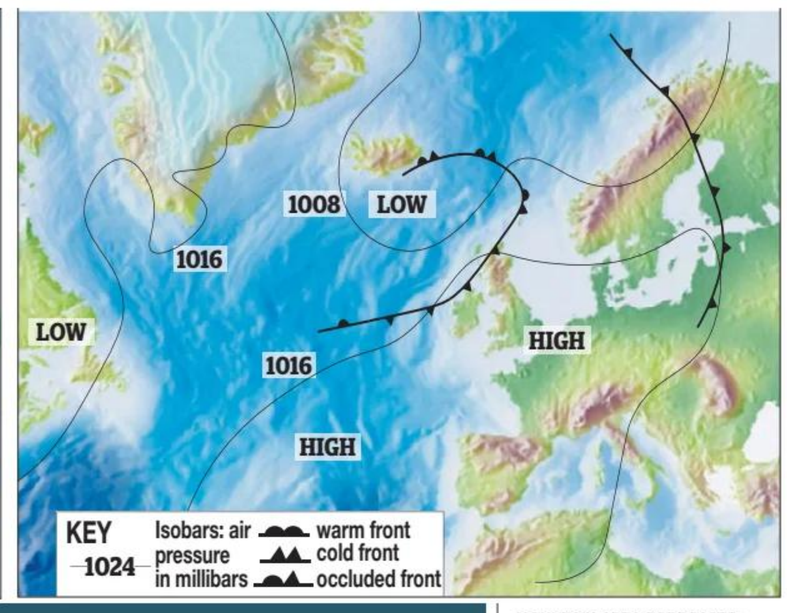
UK EXTREMES

Extremes of temperature, rainfall and sunshine for 24 hours ending 11pm Wednesday

Warmest: Writtle, 27c.
Coldest: Aboyne No 2, 9c.
Wettest: Fyvie Castle, 72.80mm.
Sunniest: St Athan, 10.4hrs.







3-DAY OUTLOOK

Today

Glasgow	18C	64F	Cloudy
Edinburgh	19C	66F	Cloudy
Eskdalemuir	17C	63F	Cloudy
Aberdeen	20C	68F	Cloudy
Aviemore	16C	61F	Rain
Wick	17C	63F	Thunder
Shetland	15C	59F	Rain

Tomorrow

Glasgow	18C	64F	Rain
Edinburgh	20C	68F	Rain
Eskdalemuir	18C	64F	Cloudy
Aberdeen	20C	68F	Cloudy
Aviemore	17C	63F	Rain
Wick	16C	61F	Rain
Shetland	15C	59F	Rain

Sunday

Glasgow	18C	64F	Rain
Edinburgh	19C	66F	Rain
Eskdalemuir	18C	64F	Rain
Aberdeen	19C	66F	Rain
Aviemore	17C	63F	Rain
Wick	16C	61F	Showers
Shetland	15C	59F	Cloudy

BRITAIN

Aberdeen	14C	57F	Cloudy
Aviemore	14C	57F	Cloudy
Belfast	15C	59F	Cloudy
Birmingham	19C	66F	Cloudy
Brighton	20C	68F	Fair
Bristol	19C	66F	Fair
Cardiff	20C	68F	Cloudy
Carlisle	16C	61F	Cloudy
Edinburgh	16C	61F	Cloudy
Eskdalemuir	14C	57F	Cloudy
Glasgow	17C	63F	Fair
Inverness	14C	57F	Cloudy
Isle of Man	17C	63F	Cloudy
Isle of Wight	20C	68F	Fair
Jersey	20C	68F	Sunny
Kinloss	14C	57F	Cloudy
Kirkwall	11C	52F	Cloudy
Lerwick	12C	54F	Cloudy
Leuchars	17C	63F	Cloudy
Liverpool	18C	64F	Fair
London	21C	70F	Fair
Manchester	17C	63F	Showers
Newcastle	15C	59F	Showers
Penzance	19C	66F	Cloudy
Perth	18C	64F	Cloudy
Prestwick	17C	63F	Fair
St Andrews	17C	63F	Cloudy
Stornoway	14C	57F	Cloudy
Tiree	15C	59F	Cloudy
Wick	13C	55F	Cloudy

REST OF THE WORLD

Ajaccio	31C	88F	Sunny
Amsterdam	20C	68F	Sunny
Athens	35C	95F	Sunny
Atlanta	30C	86F	Cloudy
Auckland	9C	48F	Sunny
Bangkok	32C	90F	Cloudy
Barbados*	31C	88F	Sunny
Barcelona	32C	90F	Fair
Beijing	35C	95F	Fair
Belgrade	37C	99F	Sunny
Benidorm	32C	90F	Fair
Berlin	27C	81F	Fair
Biarritz	25C	77F	Fair
Bordeaux	24C	75F	Fair
Boston*	29C	84F	Fair
Brisbane	20C	68F	Fair
Brussels	22C	72F	Fair
Bucharest	33C	91F	Sunny
Budapest	38C	100F	Sunny
Buenos Aires*	14C	57F	Cloudy
Cagliari	36C	97F	Sunny
Cairo	33C	91F	Sunny
Cape Town	15C	59F	Drizzle
Caracas	31C	88F	Fair
Casablanca	27C	81F	Sunny
Chicago	27C	81F	Cloudy
Christchurch	8C	46F	Sunny
Copenhagen	22C	72F	Fair
Corfu	35C	95F	Sunny
Costa Brava	34C	93F	Sunny
Crete	30C	86F	Sunny
Dubai	45C	113F	Sunny
Dublin	18C	64F	Cloudy
Faro	27C	81F	Sunny
Fiji	22C	72F	Showers
Florence	35C	95F	Sunny
Frankfurt	27C	81F	Sunny
Funchal	28C	82F	Sunny
Geneva	29C	84F	Fair
Gibraltar	29C	84F	Sunny
Helsinki	23C	73F	Showers
Hong Kong	30C	86F	Sunny
Honolulu	31C	88F	Fair
Ibiza	31C	88F	Fair
Istanbul	31C	88F	Sunny
Jerusalem	31C	88F	Sunny
Kolkata	29C	84F	Thunder
Kuala Lumpur	32C	90F	Sunny
Kuwait City	49C	120F	Sunny
Larnaca	33C	91F	Sunny
Las Palmas	28C	82F	Sunny
Las Vegas	43C	109F	Sunny
Le Touquet	20C	68F	Sunny
Lisbon	29C	84F	Sunny
Los Angeles*	24C	75F	Fair
Luxembourg	22C	72F	Cloudy
Madrid	34C	93F	Sunny
Mahon	33C	91F	Sunny
Malaga	28C	82F	Sunny
Malta	34C	93F	Sunny
Manila	27C	81F	Thunder
Melbourne	14C	57F	Cloudy
Mexico City	22C	72F	Sunny
Miami*	31C	88F	Thunder
Milan	34C	93F	Sunny
Moscow	25C	77F	Rain
Naples	34C	93F	Sunny
New Delhi	25C	77F	Thunder
New Orleans	33C	91F	Sunny
New York*	29C	84F	Cloudy
Nice	30C	86F	Sunny
Oslo	19C	66F	Cloudy
Palma	33C	91F	Fair
Paris	23C	73F	Fair
Port Stanley	2C	36F	snow
Prague	27C	81F	Rain
Reykjavik	12C	54F	Rain
Rhodes	28C	82F	Sunny
Rio de Janeiro*	31C	88F	Sunny
Rome	32C	90F	Sunny
Seoul	34C	93F	Sunny
Sicily	30C	86F	Sunny
Singapore	31C	88F	Sunny
Sofia	32C	90F	Sunny
St Petersburg	24C	75F	Thunder
Stockholm	24C	75F	Fair
Sydney	15C	59F	Sunny
Tenerife	29C	84F	Fair
Tokyo	29C	84F	Cloudy
Toronto*	28C	82F	Sunny
Tunis	33C	91F	Fair
Venice	34C	93F	Sunny
Vienna	34C	93F	Sunny
Warsaw	31C	88F	Fair
Washington*	29C	84F	Fair
Wellington	9C	48F	Sunny

MOUNTAIN AREA FORECASTS:
http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/mountain-forecast/

If you do not have access to the internet please contact the Met Office Customer Centre for a forecast:
Tel: 0870 900 0100

SUN, MOON & TIDES

SUN: Rises 5.32am 9.11pm
MOON: Rises 11.26pm 5.33pm
LIGHTING UP: 9.11pm

HIGH WATER:

Aberdeen	8.12am	9.04pm
Arbroath	8.52am	9.47pm
Glasgow	6.52am	7.14pm
Greenock	6.40am	7.08pm
Leith	9.21am	10.13pm
Mallaig	12.23am	12.45pm
Montrose	8.58am	9.50pm
Peterhead	7.42am	8.33pm
Ullapool	1.49am	2.39pm
Wick	5.55am	6.46pm

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Sir Billy Connolly pictured at Castle Fine Art on Queen Street, Glasgow with some of his original and limited edition artwork Picture: Colin Mearns

Connolly announces major city exhibition celebrating his life

Jody Harrison

AN exhibition celebrating the life and career of Sir Billy Connolly is set to be held in Glasgow, offering fans a chance to explore the stories, comedy and creativity of one of Scotland's most beloved entertainers.

The exhibition will be staged at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, in the city where Connolly, 83, was born and raised.

Connolly, affectionately known as The Big Yin, personally invited visitors to attend with a rare video message, describing the venue as a place that has a special place in his heart.

Connolly said: "Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum are having a special exhibition about my life, my times, my clothes, my comedy, and you're very welcome to come along and have a laugh.

"It's a most extraordinary place, a very dear place in my heart. When I think of it, I think of Salvador Dalí, and then how you arrive at Billy Connolly from that, I don't know.

"But if you're bored with it, there's a special restaurant there. They have the best chips in town.

"Be my guest. Come along."

The comedian, actor and artist rose to fame in the 1970s with his distinctive brand of observational and often irreverent comedy.

Over the decades, he went on to enjoy huge success as an actor, television presenter, writer and artist, earning an international following.

Connolly largely stepped back from live performance after revealing in 2013 that he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The same year, the comedian announced he was undergoing treatment for prostate cancer.

Although he continued to work on television projects, travel documentaries and his increasingly successful art career, he formally retired from stand-up comedy in 2018, bringing an end to a career that had made him one of Britain's most influential and acclaimed comedians.

Since retiring, the entertainer has made only a handful of public appearances. In 2022, he appeared via video link at the unveiling of a mural in his honour in Glasgow's Anderston area, reflecting his enduring connection to the city where he grew up.

The following year, he recorded a special video message to mark his 80th birthday celebrations and occasionally contributed interviews and messages for television documentaries looking back on his remarkable career.

Last year, Connolly made a rare public appearance to pick up an award celebrating his decades in showbusiness.

The Big Yin was guest of honour at the Key West Film Festival in Florida, where he was presented with an award for artistic excellence, given by long-time friends and Hollywood stars Steve Buscemi and Aidan Quinn.

Despite largely remaining out of the public eye, Connolly's popularity has shown no sign of fading.

In 2022, he received the BAFTA Fellowship, the academy's highest honour, with a host of comedians and actors paying tribute to his impact on British comedy and culture.

> "You're very welcome to come along and have a laugh

More recently, attention has turned to his artwork, which has attracted a devoted following and been exhibited around the UK.

The Kelvingrove exhibition, which will take place in June next year, will celebrate the many facets of his career, from his stand-up performances and television appearances to his artwork and trademark stage costumes.

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is one of Scotland's most popular visitor attractions and has hosted a number of high-profile exhibitions.

Further details about the exhibition, including opening dates and featured exhibits, are expected to be announced in due course.

A Glasgow Life spokesperson said: "We're very excited to be working on this fabulous exhibition for the city. What could be better than celebrating a Scottish national treasure, Sir Billy Connolly, in Glasgow's very own treasure trove, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum? We look forward to sharing more details soon about the opening date and what you'll get to see. Watch this space."

Artwork created by Sir Billy

Billy on stage at Glasgow's Pavilion Theatre in 1980

Artist Sir Billy gets down to work

Comedy show on train to festival

PASSENGERS on a train from London to Edinburgh were treated to a high-speed comedy show as performers took to the carriages during a special journey.

Comedians Lee Kyle, Jake Donaldson and Elaine Robertson entertained travellers onboard the 10.15am Lumo service from London King's Cross to Edinburgh Waverley.

The pop-up performance was organised in partnership with North East comedy group Felt Nowt and marked Lumo's support for the group's new venue at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Felt Nowt will showcase North East comedy talent at The Alchemist on George Street during the festival's August run.

Lumo, based in Newcastle, operates fully electric services along the East Coast Main Line, connecting London King's Cross with Newcastle, Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street.

The train operator said the event was part of its wider work to celebrate communities along its routes.

Richard Salkeld, director of communications and partnerships at Lumo, said: "Championing the north east is at the heart of what we do and this was a brilliant way to showcase comedy talent."

Student wins free housing

A UNIVERSITY of Strathclyde student has won a year of free accommodation after taking the top prize in a competition at a new Glasgow student development.

Ali Sultanbekov, a third-year software engineering student, secured a studio apartment at St Vincent Studios after winning the prize draw organised by developers Artisan Real Estate.

The purpose-built student accommodation, managed by Homes for Students under the Prestige Student Living brand, offers 321 self-contained studio apartments across 16 floors in Glasgow city centre.

Ali Sultanbekov, a third-year software engineering student, said: "I can't believe I have won such a life-changing prize."

Scottish folk music legend Bain to receive prestigious award

TRADITIONAL music legend Aly Bain is to receive the Edinburgh Award in recognition of his lifelong contribution to Scottish culture and music.

The celebrated Lerwick-born fiddler, 80, who has lived in Edinburgh since his early 20s, will be honoured at a ceremony later this year. As part of the award, his handprints will be laid outside the City Chambers alongside those of previous recipients.

Mr Bain's musical career began with The Humblebums alongside Gerry Rafferty and Billy Connolly, before he became a founding member of the influential folk group Boys of the Lough.

He has toured internationally, recorded more than 20 albums with the band and built a distinguished solo career.

He is also widely recognised for the acclaimed Transatlantic Sessions and has performed at major national occasions, including the opening of the Scottish Parliament and the funeral of Scotland's first First Minister, Donald Dewar.

Aly Bain gets set for Edinburgh Award

Established in 2007, the Edinburgh Award recognises individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the city while achieving national and international recognition.

Mr Bain joins a distinguished list of recipients including Doddie Weir, Ann Budge, Sir Chris Hoy, Elizabeth Blackadder and Sir Geoff Palmer.

Robert Aldridge, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and chair of the Civic Award Committee, said: "Aly Bain is a most deserved recipient of the Edinburgh Award, and I'm really pleased that he has accepted. Aly's contribution to Scottish music and culture is simply immeasurable."

Brewery brothers open first pub

THE brothers behind a successful Blair Atholl brewery are delighted to have opened their first pub in Perth.

Wasted Degrees – on George Street – opened to friends and family last Sunday and officially opened to the wider public yesterday.

Situated in the former BrewDog bar, businesses and residents have warmly welcomed the latest addition to Perth city centre.

It is now 10 years since Pitlochry brothers Conall and Jack Low established Wasted Degrees and the business has expanded from its humble beginnings. Initially, Conall was brewing beer in his parents' garage in a 25-litre plastic bottle. Now Wasted Degrees brews up to 29,000 litres per month and export beer to 13 countries.

Last Sunday, family and friends were invited along to the pub's opening and gathered in numbers to wish the brothers well.

Speaking after Sunday's opening, Jack Low said: "We are chuffed to bits with the response from everyone. It was just lovely to see the team out and people that know us from Blair Atholl that made the journey. There was standing room only. We are really grateful."

The decision to open a bar in Perth came about as a result of planning delays with their brewery plans in their home town.

Jack said: "With the delays to our build in Pitlochry, we did not want to sit on our hands.

"We took a glass half-full approach to life and business and want to build on the success of the brewery and taproom in Blair Atholl.

"Our new Perth pub is a step forward and we look forward to beginning construction of our new site in Pitlochry some time in 2027."

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Miliband hits Russia with new sanctions

FOREIGN Secretary Ed Miliband has announced a package of new sanctions against Russia.

Ministers are trying to turn the screw on individuals and businesses propping up Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

Among the 19 targets sanctioned are six Russian banks, six newly-acquired shadow fleet tankers and four Russian companies importing tantalum and niobium – rare metals critical for producing military kit, the Foreign Office said.

It comes after Mr Miliband held talks with Marco Rubio at the US State Department, which he described as "very productive".

The pair discussed how they can further support Ukraine against Russian, the Foreign Secretary told reporters.

Mr Miliband insisted his previous criticism of "racist" Donald Trump had not harmed relations with the White House.

He said his past comments "didn't come up" during the talks.

Mr Miliband said: "The new sanctions demonstrate the UK's unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine and bearing down on those propping up the Kremlin's aggression.

"Ukraine's fight is our fight.

"Those that threaten Ukraine's freedom and democracy are a threat to Britain's security at home.

"That's why we will continue stepping up the pressure on Russia until a just and lasting peace has been reached."

Chancellor John Healey said: "Our commitment to stand with the Ukrainian people is absolute.

"That's why we're introducing new tougher sanctions to choke off the funds that fuel [Vladimir] Putin's illegal war and are targeting his shadow fleet.

"And the UK will continue to step up our action against Russia and its shadow fleet activity to protect our national security, our economy, and global stability."

Support for firms impacted by fire

SCOTLAND'S Economy Secretary has announced £3 million in support for businesses impacted by the wildfire in the Cairngorms.

The blaze hit the area near Aviemore on July 15, with more than 500 firefighters and helicopter support called in to quell the flames.

As of Wednesday, four fire appliances and around 20 firefighters were still on site.

During a visit to the area yesterday, Stephen Flynn announced a £3 million fund, which would be administered by Highland Council, for firms impacted by the disruption caused by the fire.

The Economy Secretary said: "The wildfire in the Cairngorms National Park has had a significant impact on many businesses, particularly those premises within the cordon that have been unable to trade.

"I want to thank business owners, employees and local residents for their patience and understanding of the necessary precautions put in place by emergency services to tackle the fire and maintain public safety.

"We understand the difficult position that many now face, which is why I am pleased to be able to confirm up to £3 million for the Highland Council to support affected businesses."

Aberdeen sports centres to benefit from £27 million council investment

SPORTS centres across Aberdeen are set to benefit from a series of upgrades under a £27.164 million council investment programme.

The improvements form part of Aberdeen City Council's condition and suitability programme, which will fund repairs and enhancements to council buildings over the next three financial years. Work across the city's leisure facilities will include resurfaced car parks, upgraded lighting and better accessibility.

At the Aberdeen Snowsports Centre, lighting will be replaced and a push-pad entry system installed at the main entrance.

Aberdeen Sports Village will receive new gym entry gates, while Aberdeen Tennis Centre will also gain a push-pad entry system.

Bridge of Don Swimming Pool is due for tiling and grouting repairs, expansion joint renewals and a flat roof replacement.

Culter Sports Centre will benefit from resurfaced car parks and roadways, roof structure repairs and bay window improvements.

Elsewhere, Kincorth Sports Centre will receive new air handling units, Linx Ice Arena will gain automatic doors and an upgraded building management system, while Sheddocksley Sports Centre will benefit from drainage improvements, a new boiler and heating upgrades.

The Westburn Lounge and Outdoor Sports Centre will also see accessibility improvements.

The programme was approved by the council's Finance and Resources Committee. Convener councillor Alex McLellan said: "Sports centres mean people get a chance to take part in activities which are good for their physical and mental health."

Council co-leader Ian Yuill said: "The council is investing in these buildings as part of the work being carried out to ensure people continue to want to live, work, and visit Aberdeen."

Training course for neonatal nurses comes under fire

Concern at neonatal nurse training

Continued from Page 1

staffing levels, skills mix and access to professional development across Scotland's maternity workforce.

The paper warns that a shortage of nurses holding the Qualified in Speciality, or QIS, qualification is affecting capacity in neonatal units and contributing to inequalities in the care available across Scotland.

Edinburgh Napier has strongly defended the programme, arguing that it is designed for qualified healthcare professionals who are already working clinically and allows nurses across Scotland to study while remaining in practice.

The concerns appear in a Neonatal Priorities paper prepared for the Scottish Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce.

Dated March 2026 and subsequently released under freedom of information legislation to The Herald, the document was intended to help the taskforce develop its neonatal remit and identify priorities for action.

Under a section on workforce, culture and training, the paper says staff shortages are making it "challenging" for neonatal services to work to British Association of Perinatal Medicine standards.

It also raises concerns about maintaining specialist skills and recruiting staff into highly skilled roles.

The paper states: "QIS concern around Napier's decision to progress with largely online course by end of the year, reducing clinical practice element.

"Deemed an unacceptable course for Scotland."

It says discussions with Edinburgh Napier and other organisations were continuing and calls for equal education and support across different levels of neonatal care.

The document also warns of a lack of local educators within units to support staff training.

It adds: "Has an impact on capacity with depletion of QIS-trained staff causing inequity of care being provided."

The individual responsible for the comments is not identified. The paper's author has been redacted, although the document is marked as having been prepared by the Scottish Government for consideration by the taskforce.

The disclosure comes days after The Herald revealed that Scotland's Patient Safety Commissioner had urged ministers to discontinue the taskforce, warning it was not delivering "at the pace or direction required".

However, ministers did not adopt her recommendation.

The Scottish Government stressed that taskforce members provide independent views and said the wording did not represent an official ministerial judgement on the programme.

The dispute comes amid wider concerns about workforce pressures and staff access to training across Scotland's maternity services. The Royal College of Midwives previously told The Herald that safe maternity care was at a "tipping point", warning that services did not have sufficient staff, resources or the appropriate skill mix to meet rising demands.

Frontline midwives have described maintaining services by working additional shifts, staying beyond their contracted hours and missing breaks.

They have also reported being unable to access training because staffing shortages mean that they cannot be released from clinical duties, with some pulled from study days to cover wards.

The Nicola's Law campaign has petitioned Holyrood for mandatory and standardised women's health training across the NHS, arguing that existing education is not universally compulsory or consistently monitored.

Those concerns relate to wider women's health and midwifery rather than specialist neonatal nursing, but they underline growing scrutiny of how healthcare professionals are trained and supported across Scotland.

Edinburgh Napier said its online approach was intended to help address that challenge by making postgraduate study more accessible to healthcare professionals throughout Scotland.

> "The programme is designed specifically for qualified healthcare practitioners

The part-time postgraduate certificate is listed as an online course lasting one year, with a September start date. It is aimed at practitioners already working in neonatal care, rather than people entering healthcare for the first time.

Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree in nursing, midwifery or a related allied health profession and have current registration with the relevant professional body.

They must also have the support of their employer or line manager before registering.

A university spokesperson said: "The Neonatal Care: Qualified in Speciality programme plays an important role in developing Scotland's neonatal nursing workforce and supporting the delivery of high-quality care for babies and their families.

"As the first postgraduate qualification of its kind in Scotland, the programme has already enabled several cohorts of registered healthcare professionals to develop the advanced knowledge and skills required for specialist neonatal practice.

"The programme is designed specifically for qualified healthcare practitioners who are already working within clinical settings.

"Our online learning approach increases accessibility and flexibility, enabling nurses from across Scotland to undertake advanced study while remaining in practice and continuing to care for patients.

"Clinical experience remains a fundamental aspect of professional development in neonatal care, and we work closely with employers and healthcare partners to ensure students can apply and develop their knowledge within their own practice environments.

"We are committed to providing accessible, evidence-based and family-centred learning opportunities that strengthen Scotland's healthcare workforce.

"Our experienced, internationally recognised academic team continues to support nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in delivering the highest standards of neonatal care."

The Scottish Government said responsibility for training decisions rests with the relevant public body and individual universities rather than ministers.

A spokesperson said: "The members of the Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce offer their independent views on a wide range of issues.

"While the Scottish Government sets the overall policy direction for NHS Scotland, training is a matter for Public Service Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) and individual higher education institutions as training providers."

The spokesperson added: "We expect them to make decisions in line with their legislative duties, and to ensure the high-quality skills of the workforce as a core part of ensuring safe and effective care."

SNP auditors ramp up fraud measures after Murrell's £400,000 embezzlement

Scott Wright

THE SNP's auditors have flagged a "heightened risk of fraud" in two key areas in their report on the party's latest accounts, which were published yesterday.

Auditors state that they met the party's management to "understand where it was considered there was a susceptibility to fraud" and state in the report: "As a result of performing these procedures we have assessed the following areas as a heightened risk of fraud: related party transactions and manual journal entries."

The publication of the accounts came after former chief executive Peter Murrell pleaded guilty to embezzling more than £400,000 from the SNP on May 25 and was sentenced to more than five years in prison. The party states in the accounts that it "will be seeking to recover from the guilty party the full amount embezzled". But it adds: "The accounts do not include any assumption of a successful outcome."

The auditors state in their report: "We assessed the susceptibility of the party's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by meeting with management and those charged with governance to understand where it was considered there was susceptibility to fraud.

"This evaluation also considered how management and those charged with governance were remunerated and whether this provided an incentive for fraudulent activity. We considered the overall control environment and how management and those charged with governance oversee the implementation and operation of controls.

"In areas of the financial statements where the risks were considered to be higher, we performed procedures to address each identified risk. As a result of performing these procedures, we have assessed the following areas as a heightened risk of fraud: related party transactions and manual journal entries."

The auditors noted they have performed a number of procedures "to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free of material fraud or error".

These include: "Enquiring of management and reviewing NEC minutes for any references to breaches in laws or regulations or indications of any potential litigation or claims.

"Performing audit work procedures over the risk of management override of controls, [including] testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of related party transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing judgments made by management in their calculation of accounting estimates for potential management bias."

However, the auditors highlight that there are "inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed".

"Our audit procedures were designed to respond to the risk of material misstatements in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

"There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we are to become aware of it."

The SNP accounts show the party recorded a surplus of £510,703 during the year to December 31, 2025, following a deficit of £384,060 the year prior.

"While this is partly explained by the fact that there were no scheduled elections in 2025, it still represents a significant improvement in the party finances," the accounts state. "This was only possible thanks to some very difficult cost-cutting decisions in 2024."

Total income fell to £3.775 million from £4.506m as donations more than halved to £442,577 from £937,167. However, staff costs were cut to £978,538 from £1.466m.

'Lifeline' flights to Scottish islands to resume after government cash boost

Jody Harrison

FLIGHTS to Scottish islands are set to resume after fresh funding was announced by the Scottish Government.

Loganair reduced services to the Western and Northern Isles last month due to sustainability concerns, prompting an urgent meeting of Holyrood's Transport Committee.

Fears were raised about the impact on services and the disruption to NHS patients travelling to the mainland for treatment, who rely on flights to reach hospitals.

The airline said flights could return to normal in October if funding was made available.

Loganair reduced services

Now, Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (Hial) has received more than £1 million in Scottish Government funding to reinstate the frequency of connections from Inverness to Stornoway, Kirkwall and Sumburgh.

The restored services are due to start on October 26.

Transport Committee convener Willie Rennie MSP said: "This investment will be a positive outcome for the island communities who made powerful and compelling representations to the Transport Committee.

"From the evidence we heard, it is clear that a longer-term plan for aviation will need to be considered as part of the Islands Connectivity Plan.

"The Scottish Government needs to continue working closely with transport providers and our island communities to ensure a longer-term solution. We will continue to monitor developments in this area. However, for now, this is a step in the right direction."

Economy, Tourism and Transport Secretary Stephen Flynn said he was pleased the funding had been confirmed.

He said: "Hial and Loganair have worked collaboratively through commercial discussions to restart these services from October 26, providing greater certainty to passengers.

"Transport Scotland will now work with Hial and industry stakeholders to discuss next steps towards a sustainable, long-term solution to protect Highlands and Islands air services for those who rely on them."

Hial chief executive Paul Kelsall said the announcement was a "positive step" for passengers.

He said: "As has been the case throughout this process, we are committed to finding a lasting solution that benefits the passengers who use our airports.

"We will continue to work closely with Transport Scotland and all other stakeholders to put these routes on a sustainable, long-term footing."

Loganair chief executive Luke Farajallah said the airline recognised the routes "mattered enormously" to the people who relied on them.

He added: "We're a privately-owned airline, and keeping thin routes like these flying isn't something we can always do alone, so we're genuinely pleased that the Scottish Government has stepped in to make full services possible again from October."

Arts bosses call for investment despite deep financial pressures

Continued from Page 1

£1 invested by the Scottish Government. Although NGS has received £17.435m in funding for 2026-27, including the first year of a three-year £56m package for its Art Works project, it says it still faces "significant challenges" balancing its day-to-day budget.

The funding boost follows a sharp drop over previous years. Before the pandemic, NGS received £5.5m in Scottish Government funding for major projects, along with a further £200,000 to buy works of art.

By 2024-25, that had fallen to £3.2m, according to the organisation's financial statements.

However, NGS said the position has since changed. It said it had been allocated £17.435m for 2026-27, including £11.65m as the first year of a three-year £56m package for its flagship Art Works project and £3.185m for estates maintenance. Despite the increase, the organisation said it still faced "significant challenges" balancing its day-to-day revenue budget.

The organisation said in its latest 2024-25 annual report that it continued to operate in an "extremely challenging environment" because of plans to reduce public sector spending and growing competition for private funding.

It also warned its estates maintenance backlog was increasing against a backdrop of "standstill or reduced funding", while it was reviewing its business model to ensure it remained financially sustainable.

Anne Lyden, NGS director general said: "The arts and cultural sector urgently needs sustained investment to continue delivering for society and the economy. It is these rich art and cultural heritage experiences which attract domestic and international visitors, contributing hugely to the UK's economy and international reputation."

In its briefing seen by UK ministers, NGS said: "Investment in culture should... be viewed not simply as public subsidy, but as long-term economic investment which supports tourism growth, inward investment, skills development and international profile."

And in the analysis, circulated to MPs looking into the future of tourism, the organisation said: "Cultural institutions should be recognised as core economic infrastructure rather than solely discretionary cultural spending."

NGS argues museums, galleries and heritage organisations should be recognised as strategic economic infrastructure as well as cultural assets. It says they contribute to economic growth, employment and the UK's international profile.

In the analysis it said: "Unlocking future investment will require long-term funding certainty, stronger public and private sector collaboration, and better alignment between cultural, tourism, transport and economic development policy."

The National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh Picture: Gordon Terris

National Gallery and the castle from the Scott Monument

NGS says analysis showed that visitor spending linked to the Galleries generated an estimated £210.3m for the economy and supported nearly 7,000 jobs, while almost half of all international visitors to Edinburgh visited one of its sites.

The briefing says visitors to museums and galleries also spend money in hotels, restaurants, shops and on transport, adding that culture and tourism should be recognised as interconnected sectors rather than treated separately by governments.

> "Unlocking future investment will require long-term funding certainty

NGS said long-term investment in cultural infrastructure, workforce skills and international partnerships will be "essential" to ensuring that the UK's heritage and creative sectors continue to thrive and contribute to tourism growth, regional prosperity and international reputation in the future.

It argues stronger collaboration between governments, tourism agencies and cultural organisations would help maximise the economic and social benefits generated by the sector.

An independent Audit Scotland report has also highlighted concerns about the organisation's longer-term financial outlook.

Although auditors concluded last year that National Galleries Scotland has effective arrangements in place for financial management and sustainability, it warned it faces a "challenging financial position over the medium term" because of wider pressures on public finances.

It said in an analysis of its financial status that management was considering options to reduce costs, reprioritise work and generate additional income to strengthen the organisation's long-term financial sustainability.

NGS says investment in culture supports tourism growth, inward investment and skills development, while regional cultural infrastructure can support regeneration and local economies.

And it argues that investment should not simply be concentrated in major city centres. Instead, it says cultural investment can help regenerate communities, support local tourism, create jobs and strengthen local economies across the UK.

The briefing further says the tourism and cultural sectors continue to face significant workforce challenges including rising employment costs, recruitment difficulties and shortages of specialist skills.

It warns museums and galleries rely on highly skilled staff, including conservators, curators, estates specialists, security teams and education staff, adding that maintaining those skills is essential to protecting the quality and international reputation of Britain's cultural offer.

NGS said the pandemic fundamentally changed visitor behaviour, forcing organisations to develop stronger digital services, broader learning programmes and more flexible visitor experiences.

While those changes have helped attract audiences back, the organisation says it has also increased costs at a time when public funding remains under pressure. It said: "However, this diversification requires continued investment and long-term funding certainty at a time when organisations continue to face inflationary pressures, increased operating costs and constrained public funding."

Ex-antisemite Tory adviser was not government-certified for anti-extremism training

KEMI Badenoch's claim that a Conservative adviser and former antisemite was certified by the government to give counter-extremism training has been contradicted by the Home Office.

Joshua Bonehill-Paine has been given a role working with the Conservatives on tackling radicalisation after withdrawing as a local election candidate for the party over a backlash against his selection.

Tory leader Ms Badenoch has defended him by insisting he has been rehabilitated since his convictions for harassing a Jewish politician and producing an advert for a neo-Nazi rally.

Earlier this week, she told reporters Mr Bonehill-Paine had since "been certified by the Home Office to train police officers on antisemitism and on countering extremism".

But in a statement, the department said: "The Home Office does not certify individuals to deliver training.

"We do provide funding to civil society organisations, who may use individuals to deliver training on preventing extremism that is commissioned by local authorities."

Mr Bonehill-Paine was convicted in 2016 of racially aggravated harassment against Labour peer Baroness Luciana Berger, who is Jewish and was then MP for Liverpool Wavertree.

He wrote several blog posts about her, describing her as "an evil money-grabber" with a "deep-rooted hatred of men".

In one post, he claimed the number of Jewish Labour MPs was a "problem".

He was previously jailed for producing an advert illustrated with a picture of Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz which promised "an absolute gas" at a rally in Golders Green, north London.

Earlier this week, Mr Bonehill-Paine said he had "no excuses" for his previous offending, and added he has since dedicated himself to "challenging the wave of hatred British Jews continue to face".

But the Tories faced a backlash from Jewish groups and political opponents over the decision to select him to fight the new Somerset Council seat of Crewkerne South next year, with critics arguing his past convictions make him unfit for a role in public life.

After withdrawing his candidacy, Mr Bonehill-Paine said he had been offered a position as an adviser to the Conservatives' culture and integration commission "specifically focusing on how young men become radicalised".

Lady Berger said the new decision was an "insult", while Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said the Tories had questions to answer over any activities he undertakes on behalf of the party.

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor 'chased by masked stalker on the Sandringham estate'

ANDREW Mountbatten-Windsor says he came face to face with an alleged stalker wearing a balaclava who chased after him in a confrontation close to his Sandringham home, a court has heard.

Alex Jenkinson, 39, is charged with using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards the former Duke of York in Norfolk on May 6.

Suffolk Police are also applying for a civil Stalking Protection Order against Jenkinson, relying on evidence from Andrew and searches on Jenkinson's phone.

At Westminster Magistrates' Court yesterday, Deputy Chief Magistrate Tan Ikram read out parts of Andrew's witness statement which is due to form the centrepiece of both legal proceedings.

The royal said that when he was out for a walk with his dogs on the estate, he spotted a car which he assumed to belong to press photographers, and then he and his security detail "drove past the car".

He said a man "turned and faced me – he was wearing a balaclava face covering".

Andrew provided a description of the "out-of-place" man, and added in his statement: "I then saw a loose dog running towards him.

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

"Then he realised who I was and began to sprint after my vehicle."

Yesterday's court hearing took place in Jenkinson's absence after he arrived with his dog, Indie, and was blocked from entering the building by court officials.

As Jenkinson stood on the pavement outside, his lawyer, Claire Howell, told Judge Ikram: "He has had to bring his dog with him, so he wasn't allowed inside the court.

"He is homeless and currently in accommodation in a Travelodge.

"He is not allowed to leave the dog there. It provides him with support, he suffers from ADHD."

She conceded that she has no documents to prove Jenkinson's medical condition, or his need for a support animal, and the judge told her: "I'm not prepared to have a dog in the courtroom simply because he is homeless and he happens to keep a dog. I'm not saying he is not telling the truth but there's nothing to corroborate it."

He added: "We accommodate people who have ADHD and have support animals. I would want something more than he is homeless and happens to have a dog."

The judge heard and agreed an application for the police bid for a Stalking Protection Order to be adjourned, and decided the hearing could take place in Jenkinson's absence.

Ms Howell told the court Jenkinson has now been found temporary accommodation where he can leave the dog for future hearings, and she added: "I don't want to give character evidence on behalf of the dog, but having spent the last hour-and-a-half with him, I can say he is a very well-behaved animal."

Jenkinson is accused of causing the former Duke of York to "fear unlawful violence" during the confrontation in Wolferton, close to his Marsh Farm property.

Jenkinson was detained under the Mental Health Act for around a month afterwards. He pleaded guilty to failing to provide a specimen of blood while in custody on May 6. But he denies the public order offence against Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and has also pleaded not guilty to a further charge of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to cause fear or provoke unlawful violence against another man, Stephen Terry, in King's Lynn, on May 5.

Andrew is due to give evidence by videolink at the criminal trial, which has been set for December 21. Jenkinson, who comes from Stowmarket, Suffolk, is also fighting the making of the Stalking Protection Order.

Judge Ikram ruled that the former duke, as well as Mr Terry and an eyewitness to the Norfolk incident, must give evidence for a second time at the hearing to determine the Stalking Protection Order application.

"I am persuaded that fairness demands the respondent to these proceedings (Jenkinson) be allowed to call and cross-examine these witnesses", he said.

At a hearing at the end of July, the court heard that evidence from Jenkinson's phone – including alleged searches on Andrew, Sandringham and "weapons" – is due to feature in the trial.

In the criminal proceedings, Jenkinson is on bail with conditions not to go near a number of sites linked to the royal family – Sandringham, Buckingham Palace, Balmoral, Windsor and Highgrove.

He must also not try to contact Andrew directly or indirectly, or approach him or enter Norfolk.

As the hearing concluded, Judge Ikram extended the interim Stalking Protection Order against Jenkinson, set a pre-trial hearing at Loughborough Magistrates' Court for January 22, and said the final hearing would take place at Westminster Magistrates' Court on February 16.

Glasgow emission zone income drops

DRIVERS in Glasgow paid over £500,000 in Low Emission Zone (LEZ) fines last year – but the scheme's operating costs were higher than the income for the first time.

Around 2,000 penalty charge notices per month were issued to non-compliant vehicles entering the zone between April last year and the end of March this year.

The LEZ, which covers Glasgow city centre and was created to reduce levels of harmful vehicle emissions, was initially rolled out in 2018 to apply to buses.

It came into effect for all vehicles in May 2022 and enforcement began after a one-year grace period.

More than £980,000 was claimed in fines in 2023-24, with just over £750,000 in 2024-25. For 2025-26, income dropped again to £513,873.

A new council report states the spend on running the LEZ was £781,765, with a net expenditure of £267,892. It adds: "Revenue has fallen in line with the reduction in PCNs [fines] issued as the scheme has matured.

"This reduction was expected and can be attributed to higher levels of compliance with the emission standards in the general fleet and higher levels of awareness of the LEZ among drivers of non-compliant vehicles."

The majority – 78% – of fines in 2025-26 were issued to cars, with light vehicles receiving 21%. The council received 3,078 appeals, with 82% – or 2,531 – of these successful.

Fines were mostly cancelled due to the recipient being a blue badge holder, providing evidence their vehicle was LEZ compliant or exempt, or the vehicle registration being entered incorrectly.

Unsuccessful appeals have been referred to an independent adjudicator on 28 occasions. Five were allowed by the adjudicator while 18 were unsuccessful. Two were withdrawn by the applicant.

New app to make cooking easier

A NEW Edinburgh-developed app is aiming to make home cooking more accessible for neurodivergent people.

Scran has been designed specifically for people with ADHD, dyslexia and autism, by simplifying traditional recipes into clearer, easier-to-follow instructions.

Created by tech professionals Grant Macgregor and Jonny Kirkaldy, the app uses artificial intelligence to reformat recipes imported from websites, social media, photos or cookbooks.

Rather than requiring users to constantly refer back to an ingredients list, Scran places ingredient quantities directly into each step and breaks recipes into single, manageable actions.

Users can also tick off completed steps, adjust serving sizes, generate aisle-sorted shopping lists and switch to dyslexia-friendly fonts.

The founders, who have a combined 15 years' experience in digital product design, developed the app with accessibility at its core.

Scran was co-designed with input from 200 people during a pilot programme. One user with dyslexia described the app as "life-changing", saying it removed the stress often associated with following recipes.

North Berwick dominates prime market

NORTH Berwick accounted for two in every five property sales above £500,000 in East Lothian over the past year, according to new research.

Analysis by HomeBench, commissioned by East Lothian property consultancy Fyndd, found that 42% of all sales above £500,000 across six key East Lothian locations took place in North Berwick.

The town also accounted for the same proportion of sales above £1 million.

Between June 2025 and May 2026, North Berwick recorded 69 of the region's 166 sales above £500,000 and 13 of the 31 transactions exceeding £1m.

The average sale price during the period was £513,745, while the highest recorded sale reached £2.65 million.

Overall, North Berwick saw 173 property sales, representing 24% of all transactions across the six locations included in the study.

While Dunbar and Haddington recorded higher overall transaction numbers, only 8% of sales in each town exceeded £500,000, and neither recorded a £1m sale.

Gullane also performed strongly, with 48% of its 67 sales topping £500,000 and 9% exceeding £1m.

Dirleton and Archerfield remained the region's most exclusive market, with 13 of their 16 sales above £500,000 and 10 selling for more than £1m.

Matthew Little, consultant at Fyndd, said: "North Berwick's scale sets it apart.

"North Berwick is no longer simply a desirable seaside alternative to Edinburgh, it has developed into one of Scotland's deepest and most active prime property markets.

"The town has broad appeal with a huge amount to offer, with its annual events such as Fringe by the Sea."

Engineer group collapsed owing £3m

A SCOTTISH engineering group operating two factories fell into administration after 42 years owing £3 million.

Documents shine a light on what led to the group's collapse with all jobs lost and reveal that more than half of the debt is unlikely to be repaid.

A report outlines the final stages of the Falkirk group that employed 93 people across AIM Engineering & Fabrication Limited and the Hescott Engineering Company Limited.

It reveals that the firm "took the difficult decision to send all employees home" when it "had insufficient funding to meet its payroll obligations" ahead of the administration.

Alistair McAlinden and James Dewar from Interpath, who were appointed as joint administrators in May, said the loss of a key customer and creditor pressure weighed heavy on the firms that provided metal fabrication, design, installation, and maintenance services to a wide range of industries including oil and gas, petrochemical, renewables and construction.

The administrators said: "As matters continued to deteriorate it was concluded that there was no other viable alternative but to seek the appointment of the joint administrators."

Cromarty hydrogen facility given green light by council despite objections

OPINIONS were divided as Highland Council voted to grant planning permission for a green energy site near a Ross-shire village.

Permission has been granted for a major hydrogen production facility to be built in Edderton, near Tain, as members of the north planning committee made the decision following a vote this week.

The Cromarty Hydrogen Project will include a 15MW hydrogen production and storage facility with a hydrogen purification plant, hydrogen and oxygen processing plant, and compression and cooling equipment – along with other associated infrastructure.

It was explained in a report discussed at the meeting that the energy-making process at the plant had been described as "green hydrogen" by the applicant.

During the decision, all members who spoke indicated a support for hydrogen production in the area but some felt the greenfield site was not right for the proposal.

Councillor Richard Gale (East Sutherland and Edderton, Liberal Democrats) moved a motion to refuse the application as he said the development would be better placed on a brownfield site.

It was explained to the committee by planning expert Peter Whelan that the applicant had looked at 10 alternate sites but had not been "forthcoming" when the council asked for further details.

Cllr Gale's motion was seconded by his party colleague Cllr Jan McEwan (Wick and East Caithness). During the vote the pair were joined by Cllr Margret Paterson (Dingwall and Seaforth, Independent) but the trio ultimately lost the vote three to nine.

The winning amendment to grant the application was put forward by Cllr Raymond Bremner (Wick and East Caithness, SNP) who said he took a "different view" from his colleagues.

There were 10 public objections to the plans.

Concerns raised about the impact on the local roads, traffic, and the effect on the residents' private water supply.

Seeds of hope

Dr Hiro Shimai, the Japanese-born curator of Glasgow Botanic Gardens, whose parents survived the Hiroshima atom bomb, marks the 81st anniversary of the US bombing by planting a Ginkgo tree from seeds of a tree that survived the Second World war attack, in the Lord Provost Peace Garden **World News: Page 13**

Job fears as Diageo swings the axe in $1bn cost-cutting drive

Moves from Diageo's 'Drastic Dave'

Continued from Page 1

key US market, fell by 8.6% to £2.031bn, with the reporting period ending before President Trump scrapped tariffs on imports of Scotch whisky to the US in July.

In Asia Pacific, which includes China and India, operating profit was down 22.5% at $690m.

However the company said it was pleased with its progress in Europe, LAC, and Africa, with each division reporting a rise in profits.

Chris Beckett, consumer staples analyst at Quilter Cheviot, said the results were better than expected.

He said: "This was a highly anticipated set of results for Diageo as more detail is added to its turnaround strategy. While there are still a lot of moving parts for a business that is in transition, the overall results were better than expected – a nice to have when investors were perhaps worried about what today would bring.

"Operating profit is higher than the market expected as a result of greater cost savings. Much of this has been driven by activities undertaken by the CFO [chief financial officer] prior to Dave Lewis' arrival as chief executive, putting the business in a good shape to absorb greater cost savings going forward.

"Indeed, 'Drastic Dave' is perhaps living up to his reputation, with subsequently deeper cuts that will last longer than many expected. The company has identified $1bn in cost savings, driven primarily by job losses and efficiencies, while restructuring costs have come in at $1.2bn, highlighting that this isn't a one-year exercise, but a multi-year programme aimed at righting the Diageo ship.

> "Operating profit is higher than the market expected

"The good news for the company is it has not had to throw the kitchen sink at this turnaround, however. The narrative is more of a de-rating story rather than earnings collapsing."

The company recommended a full-year dividend of 50 cents per share, down from 62.98 cents per share last year. This comes after it announced in February that the interim dividend would be a cut to a "more appropriate level" to help shore up the balance sheet.

Sir Dave said: "The revised operating framework is being rolled out across Diageo and the changes are significant. In 2026, this change incurs a cost of $0.8 billion (c.70% of the total cost of the two-year programme), with savings realised over two years starting in fiscal 27. These savings will allow us to invest in the turnaround without needing to reduce operating profit."

'Drastic Dave' lives up to reputation as costs slashed at Scotch whisky giant

Analysis
Scott Wright

SPECULATION has been rife since Sir Dave Lewis took charge of Diageo in January that a major cost-cutting round would be on the cards at the Scotch whisky giant.

And when the time came for the FTSE 100 veteran to announce his grand plan for the drinks heavyweight yesterday he more than lived up to the "Drastic Dave" billing he earned for his approach to removing costs during his time at Unilever many years ago.

Diageo, custodian of some of the world's most famous drinks brands, including Johnnie Walker, Guinness and Smirnoff, revealed its strategy to slash costs by around $1 billion over the next three years in a bid to revive the company's fortunes.

It came as the company reported its operating profit had fallen by 27.2% to $3.156bn in the year ended June 30, a better result than the City had expected.

The FTSE 100 giant has certainly had a tricky period over recent years, having found itself fighting fires on a host of fronts – from an over-stocking problem in Latin America and the Caribbean under former boss Debra Crew, to Trump tariffs and weak demand in the key markets of the US and China.

It has also found itself at the mercy of significant societal change, as younger adults have begun to drink less and the rise of weight-loss drugs has dampened demand.

After parting company with Ms Crew in November, City watchers by and large applauded the appointment of Sir Dave as a safe pair of hands who would also be unafraid to cut costs – as his previous spells at Tesco and Unilever underlined.

True to form, Sir Dave wasted no time in cutting the interim dividend in half in February and has now embarked on a major exercise to revamp Diageo's operating framework and streamline the supply chain.

Judging by the rise yesterday in the company's shares, which have been in steady decline for the last four years, the City looks to have given its seal of approval to the plan.

But it will not come without some pain being inflicted across the workforce, and not least in Scotland. Some 172 jobs at Diageo distilleries in areas such as Speyside and Islay are at risk of redundancy as part of the drive to "redesign our operating framework". It underlines the human impact of business decisions that benefit shareholders and improve the bottom line while bringing the risk of unemployment to parts of the workforce.

This is all the more unfortunate given the important role Diageo's Scotch whisky distilleries play in the economic life of rural communities in Scotland.

EasyJet set for $5.7 billion Apollo takeover after rival bidder walks away

EASYJET is to be bought by private equity firm Apollo in a £5.7 billion deal after rival suitor Castlelake walked away from a bidding war for the budget airline.

Castlelake had previously made a £5.5bn offer to buy easyJet but saw this surpassed by Apollo last month.

Ahead of a deadline today, Castlelake confirmed it did not intend to make a formal takeover offer, allowing Apollo to progress with its deal.

The move will see the US firm, which also owns Wagamama owner The Restaurant Group, pay shareholders 715p per share for the business.

The deal, which will require approval at a shareholder vote, is expected to complete in the first quarter of 2027.

EasyJet was founded by Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou in 1995 to offer a low-cost alternative to British Airways and it has since expanded to become one of the largest networks across Europe.

Sir Stelios and his family, who own around 15% of the business, have given the takeover their support. "I am pleased with Apollo's strategic intentions for the easyJet business, which aim to create more growth," he said. "My family and I intend to remain invested as long-term major shareholders of easyJet for the next chapter in the company's journey."

Sir Stephen Hester, non-executive chairman of easyJet, said: "The easyJet board has carefully evaluated the proposal from Apollo alongside easyJet's standalone prospects.

"While we remain confident in the strength of our business and the opportunities ahead, we believe this offer appropriately recognises the quality of the business we have built and delivers immediate, certain and attractive value for shareholders."

Bosses at Apollo said they believe the airline is "one of the most attractive businesses" in the global aviation sector.

Alex van Hoek, partner and European private equity lead at the firm, said: "We are proud to be trusted to play a lead role supporting the easyJet Group in this next phase of its growth and furthering its important contribution to the European and UK aviation sector."

Edinburgh festivals to secure new council funding

McEwan Hall is one of the biggest venues used during the Edinburgh Fringe Picture: Ryan Warburton

Exclusive
Brian Ferguson

EDINBURGH'S festivals are set to secure the first increase in their city council funding for a decade.

Officials are recommending a 5% increase across the board is implemented from 2027 to help the festivals tackle rising costs.

More than £550,000 of income from Edinburgh's new visitor levy income is expected to be ringfenced for festivals and other arts organisations.

They have had to grapple with either standstill funding settlement or funding cuts from the council over the last decade, despite the impact of the Covid pandemic, global conflicts, inflation and, most recently, the new tourist tax scheme.

Although a 5% increase has been agreed for the next financial year, the introduction of new long-term funding agreements has been delayed by 12 months to allow more time for a wide-ranging review of how the cultural sector is supported in the city.

More than £4 million has been earmarked for festivals, events, arts organisations and venues in the council's budget over the last decade.

Key recipients include the Edinburgh International Festival, the Fringe Society, and the city's annual celebrations of book, visual art, jazz and film.

Other organisations which have long-term funding agreements with the council include the Royal Lyceum and Traverse theatres, Dance Base, the Queen's Hall and the Filmhouse cinema.

In February, the council committed more than £5.6m in new funding for its arts and culture "strategic partners" in the first three years of the visitor levy, which is expected to be generating an additional £50m for the council by 2028-29.

At the time, the council said the new levy was an opportunity to increase the "financial stability" and improve the "financial resilience" of arts organisations.

It suggested that the new "strategic partners innovate" pot would be aimed at supporting organisations to "increase and diversify activity", with the council aiming to use the new investment to "ensure additionality is included".

Eligibility for the fund, which was approved by the council in May, suggested it could be used to support programming innovation, large-scale public celebrations, shared audience development proposals, and projects celebrating the 80th anniversary of Edinburgh's first festivals, which were launched in the aftermath of the Second World War.

However, a new report from the city council has revealed that organisations have since told senior arts and council officials that additional investment in their "core support" would be more valuable to organisations than the creation of new projects.

Councillors are being asked to approve a "blanket" 5% increase in 2027-28 for all festivals, events and arts organisations it currently supports, which comes to around £555,000. Officials have highlighted how their core funding support has "remained static over the last 10 years".

However, the council has still to allocate around £3m from the first two years of the "innovate" fund.

It has also said it wants to open up access to the new funding pot to arts organisations which do not currently have long-term support as well as projects which have "a strong heritage element".

If approved by councillors, the proposed increases in funding would see the EIF's support from the council go up to just over £2m in the next financial year.

The book festival would receive £52,500, the art festival would be allocated £21,000, the film festival would get £15,750, and the jazz festival's support would increase to £105,000.

The new council report, by senior cultural partnerships manager David Waddell, states that "budget restraints" have meant the council has not been able to increase the level of funding for organisations, or the number of them, for more than 10 years.

He said addressing the "core funding" of organisations was a key theme which emerged from recent discussions with arts organisations, events and festivals.

San Francisco Ballet will perform this year

Futures Institute is home of Book Festival

His report adds: "Certainty over funding arrangements until March 2028 was identified as being of higher value than launching a new funding programme in haste.

"Continuing current arrangements would mean a further year of not being able to support organisations who are not currently funded but would like to be considered. In extending current funding arrangements, an opportunity should be created to open new funding to these organisations.

> "An opportunity should be created to open new funding

"Officers are recommending an extension to current funding arrangements to allow a full review of funding arrangements, and for this extension to include a blanket 5% uplift to help with inflationary pressures."

Applications for up to £500,000 will open next month for the new innovation fund, which will support projects running in the city until 2028.

Biggest-ever Edinburgh Fringe staged as 500 new shows join festival line-up

Exclusive
Brian Ferguson

A RECORD number of shows and events will be staged at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe – after hundreds more were added after the official programme was published.

Another 553 have been added to the line-up of the 79-year-old festival since its launch in early June, with more than 4,200 now registered.

The number of venues playing host to Fringe shows has shot up from 258 to 299 over the last two months.

This year's final Fringe line-up represents an 8% increase on the 3,894 shows which went ahead last year.

The Fringe Society, which oversees the festival, said the final line-up includes 430 free shows, 796 "pay-what-you-want" events, and an average ticket price of just £13.

The record-breaking Fringe has emerged despite concerns about the rising costs faced by performers and companies trying to bring shows to Edinburgh, and the impact of the city's new visitor levy, introduced at the end of July.

However, organisers of the festival suggested there was a growing trend for booking shorter runs of productions which was not reflected in the overall programme numbers.

They have also highlighted a growing number of one-off shows and events being registered.

Although the first tickets for Fringe shows now go on sale in February, many artists and companies do not register until after the programme is launched and rely on promoting shows online.

The overall tally of 4,202 has surpassed the record-breaking figure of 4,105, which was notched up seven years ago.

The 2019 edition of the Fringe was the last to be staged before the pandemic and the only one to see more than three million tickets sold.

This year's Fringe will have around 300 more shows and events than last year's edition, which ended up selling more than 2.6 million tickets.

Chief executive Tony Lankester told The Herald: "The number of shows we have on is healthy. If that number was going down I would definitely be worried, but I do want to be cautious about it.

"The overall number of shows is good, but we must not let it make us complacent. There are lots of challenges that we need to address.

"If more artists are using Edinburgh in that way and responding to the expense of coming to Edinburgh in that way that is fine.

"Some of the venues don't like it, because it puts extra pressure on them and has a financial impact on them.

"If artists are coming to Edinburgh for shorter runs, it will be harder for them to get reviews and will be harder for them to realise the full benefits of being at the Fringe in the first place."

World-class music festival is on the bill for Borders Music Festival in September

A MUSIC festival is set to transform the Scottish Borders into a hub for world-class performances next month.

The Sixteen, one of the world's finest choral ensembles, is to perform at the Borders Music Festival for the first time.

This year's festival, from September 11 to 20, is being staged at various venues, including Melrose Parish Church, the town's Corn Exchange and The Great Tapestry of Scotland in Galashiels.

From Baroque to brass, choral to opera and folk to jazz, music lovers will be treated to performances by internationally renowned musicians and ensembles in the heart of the Borders.

Harry Christophers, founder and conductor of The Sixteen, said: "It is always a great pleasure for us to perform in Scotland but to be part of the new and enterprising Borders Festival is very special indeed.

"We are so looking forward to getting to know a new community and bringing our music to a wider audience.

"I firmly believe that our music is for everyone and we cannot wait to see you all in September."

The Sixteen will perform at the festival Picture: Johnny Millar

Fresh from Celtic Connections, international harpist Lucie Hendry brings her folk trio to the festival and, after a sold-out performance at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival, the Paul Harrison Trio perform The Koln Concert Revisited and The Great American Songbook.

The London Handel Players bring the Baroque period to life while The Ross Milligan Quartet pay tribute to the great names in jazz.

But as well as bringing exceptional musicians and ensembles from across Scotland and beyond to perform, the Borders Music Festival is equally passionate about championing local musicians and giving them a platform to perform alongside world-class artists.

This is illustrated by The Scottish Chamber Orchestra's acclaimed VIBE in the Borders Showcase which promises a high-energy orchestral performance with young Borderers.

There's also a celebration of the work and sound of the brass band, with the Scottish Borders Youth Brass Band performing alongside the UK championship standard Jedforest Instrumental Band.

Fittingly, the festival concludes with Evensong performed by Borders Chamber Choir in Melrose's Holy Trinity Church, where the festival began.

Robert Marshall, chief executive and artistic director of the Borders Music Festival, said: "We are thrilled to announce the programme for this year's Borders Music Festival, bringing world-class performers such as one of the world's finest choral ensembles, The Sixteen, to the Scottish Borders for the first time ever.

"As our audiences have grown, the variety and originality of our musical offering has become widely recognised across Scotland and beyond.

"From Baroque to brass, choral to jazz, and opera to folk, we look forward to sharing our love of music with you during ten special days in September.

"Our ambition is to establish a flourishing festival that heightens the awareness and appreciation of high-quality music across the Scottish Borders – and create opportunities for talented young musicians to shine."

Event and ticket information for the forthcoming festival is available at www.bordersmusicfestival.com

Project seeks to return town's trees

A THREE-year project to restore an East Lothian town's tree population damaged by a 40-year-old strike and new housing developments has been launched.

Former mining town Tranent has one of the lowest tree counts in the county with an estimated 16% canopy cover – half of the target set by environmental supporters.

It is believed the town was hit hard during the mining strike of 1984 when a cold winter left residents resorting to cutting trees to heat their homes. Since then, new housing developments have been added, reducing green space, with more planned in the future.

Now the Tranent Tree Town project has been launched with funding from the Urban Forestry Challenge Fund from Future Woodlands Scotland.

Local charity Natural Connections is working with East Lothian Council amenity services to involve local schools, community groups and residents in a bid to increase tree numbers across the town.

Russel McLarty, chairperson of Natural Connections and the project said: "When I visit other East Lothian towns it is so obvious that they are 'leafy' with much more tree cover.

"One of the reasons for a loss of trees in Tranent, a traditional mining town, was the strike of 1984-85 which was a cold winter and people resorted to cutting trees for fuel.

"Some of the new housing areas in Tranent have been developed with hardly a tree in sight where the most recent are a bit better in having some areas of planting.

"We are, however, facing the threat of new housing being built in an area to the east of the town, with the removal of established and quite important emergent woodland."

East Lothian Council launched its own tree strategy over a year ago.

Logistics firm's premises vandalised

POLICE are investigating after activists vandalised a logistics firm in Glasgow they claim has links to Israel.

The group targeted DB Schenker, part of DSV, which they allege provides "logistics transport services" to Israeli defence technology company Elbit Systems.

Activists say they by-passed security in the early hours of Tuesday and covered the building's foyer and offices with paint and messages saying "Drop Elbit" on the walls.

Pictures showed broken windows at the building in the Hillington area.

The group said the action came after incidents targeting DSV at Birmingham Airport and Bristol earlier this year.

A spokesperson for the Glasgow group said: "As long as DSV and its subsidiaries maintain their contract with Elbit Systems, property damage and disruption will continue."

The autonomous group said dropping Elbit could be DSV's "wisest logistics decision yet".

A Police Scotland spokesperson said: "Around 6am on Tuesday, August 4, police received a report of premises in Mossland Road, Hillington, Glasgow, having been vandalised.

"Inquiries are ongoing."

DSV was approached for comment.

‘Relax rules for drivers who pass automatic car test’

MOTORISTS who pass automatic driving tests should be allowed behind the wheel of a manual car after completing a one-hour conversion session, says the AA.

Edmund King, president of the motoring services company, said “it doesn’t make sense” for them to wait months for a manual driving test slot, as most “quickly develop good road skills”.

Motorists who pass the test in an automatic car are currently only permitted to drive automatics. If they later want to drive a manual car – such as when working, hiring a car or borrowing a friend or relative’s car – they must pass a further test.

But Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) figures show the average waiting time to book a test in May was nearly 22 weeks, compared with about five weeks in February 2020 before the coronavirus pandemic.

The proportion of learners taking automatic driving tests in Britain is at a record high.

DVSA data shows 29.4% of all tests conducted in the last financial year were in an automatic car, up from about 4% in 2007/08.

Electric cars, which have surged in popularity, do not have a conventional gearbox, meaning people who choose to learn in them take automatic tests.

Drugs haul after city incident

POLICE investigating a disturbance in a city street found more than £100,000 worth of drugs.

Officers called to a property in Dundee’s Kinghorne Place on Tuesday night made the discovery of a “significant quantity” of cocaine inside a vehicle parked nearby.

The drugs were estimated to have a street value of £120,000.

A 27-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection and was due to appear before Dundee Sheriff Court.

Detective Sergeant David Feeney said: “Drugs cause misery and harm in our communities and we remain committed to disrupting this illegal activity. We would urge anyone with concerns to contact us.”

Historic Nottinghamshire bike firm Raleigh prepares to enter administration

THE company behind Nottinghamshire-based bike maker Raleigh, which was founded 139 years ago, has filed to appoint administrators.

Accell UK and Ireland, part of Netherlands-based Accell Group, filed a notice of intention to appoint administrators as the wider group kickstarted insolvency proceedings.

The chief executive of Accell said it was a “deeply sad and frustrating situation” and that it had “tirelessly explored” every option for the future of the cycling business.

The firm bought Raleigh in 2012 for around $100 million (£74 million), adding to its roster of bike brands in Europe including Haibike, Winora and Ghost.

Raleigh was founded in Nottingham in 1887 and was known for its Chopper model which featured extended handlebars and is now part of its “retro” range.

It no longer manufactures bikes from Nottingham and its head office has moved to Eastwood, while the company has shifted to selling electric bikes under Accell’s ownership.

Accell went through restructuring in February, securing additional funding from shareholders and lenders and reducing debts.

It said it had since “explored every possible avenue” for its future including discussions with potential buyers, but that it had not been possible to find a solution which means the business can continue operating. It has therefore initiated insolvency proceedings in the Netherlands.

Accell’s boss Jonas Nilsson said: “This is a deeply sad and frustrating situation given all the hard work and everything we have achieved, with the support of shareholders and lenders, to restructure Accell’s operations and finances.

“It is an especially difficult moment for our employees, creditors, customers, suppliers, and partners.”

Farewell to Brenda

The cortege arriving at St Catherine’s Church in Dublin, for the funeral of Oscar-winning actress Brenda Fricker yesterday

Afghan boxer charged with killing of Scottish aid worker in Greece

Nick Forbes

A MAN accused of killing a Scottish aid worker in Athens and disposing of her body has appeared in court charged with homicide with intent.

The 26-year-old is accused of killing Elisabeth-Jane Ross, 38, who was discovered by a homeless man in a derelict building in the Kypseli area of the Greek capital on July 18.

Internal Greek reports refer to the suspect by the initials “SA”, but it has been established he is Sharif Ahmadzai, an Afghan boxer who left his home country after being orphaned as a teenager.

Ahmadzai arrived at the Court of First Instance in Athens at about 10.40am local time yesterday, in the back of a grey Hyundai car with blacked-out windows.

Ahmadzai’s lawyer Christos Erdas confirmed his client did not speak during yesterday’s hearing, and that he did not submit a plea in relation to any of the three charges he faces.

He was initially detained on illegal weapons possession charges but is now facing a charge of homicide with intent, as well as allegations that he stole more than €10,000 (£8,500) from Ms Ross’s bank accounts using her bank cards.

Homicide with intent is understood to be equivalent to a murder charge in Scotland.

Mr Erdas said further medical evidence is needed before his client will be in a position to tender a plea – including official confirmation of how Ms Ross died.

He also said the defence put in a request for Ms Ross’s medical records to be obtained from the UK as part of the case.

The judge ordered Ahmadzai to be kept in pre-trial detention while further evidence is compiled, ahead of another hearing at a future date. He was then escorted back into the car by masked officers shortly before 2pm, before being driven off the premises.

The court complex is located on the city’s Evelpidon Street, a short walk from the derelict building where the charity worker’s body was found.

Floral tributes have been placed on the ground next to the structure, with one card containing the words “Elisabeth-Jane Ross. Rest in peace” written in Greek.

Police said the suspect was detained for questioning after investigators reviewed surveillance camera footage recorded nearby.

After allegedly killing Ms Ross, Ahmadzai is accused of sending a series of messages from her phone to her friends and family before switching off the device. He is then said to have bought another phone and texted her friends in Athens, including his wife, impersonating an unnamed jihadist saying he had killed the Scot because of her religion, Greek newspapers Proto Thema and Ta Nea reported.

The newspapers said his wife, a US citizen named Alaina Hall, told the police she suspected her husband’s involvement in the killing when she woke up to find he was not in their apartment and tracked his phone to where Ms Ross was staying.

Ms Ross is believed to have died a number of days before she was found, during which time temperatures reached 36C.

Authorities were able to identify her using fingerprints.

Ms Ross, who is understood to be from Edinburgh, entered Greece on June 26 and was initially staying with friends in Piraeus, a port area of Athens.

The aid worker is then said to have gone to meet American friends in another part of the Greek capital, but it is unclear if this ever happened.

Authorities are awaiting the results of tissue analysis to determine whether she died from suffocation, as suggested by a preliminary assessment by the medical examiner.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office said earlier: “Our thoughts are with Elisabeth’s family during this difficult time.

“We are providing consular support and are in contact with the local authorities.”

A Police Scotland spokesperson previously said: “We are aware of the death of a Scottish woman in Athens and are liaising with authorities in Greece.

“Officers are providing support to her family in Scotland.”

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Nigeria hails 308 freed after abductions

AT least 308 people abducted in different attacks in the northern part of Nigeria have been rescued, the country’s president said.

Those rescued include 163 people abducted from Woro community in Kaiama area of Kwara state in February, and 145 people kidnapped mostly from Niger state, Nigeria’s President Bola Tinubu said in a statement.

Details of the operation that freed the more than 300 people who spent months in captivity were not disclosed, with the statement only saying they were rescued from a forest and are now receiving medical attention.

It was described as the “largest rescue operation ever” undertaken in the country on a single day by security forces, according to Mr Tinubu. “The successful execution of this intelligence-led operation demonstrates the growing efficiency and collaboration among our security services,” the president said.

“I commend our gallant men and women in uniform for their bravery and unwavering commitment.”

Abductions at schools are common in Nigeria, where militant groups target them to put pressure on the government and extract ransoms.

Area of stunning scenery awarded NNR status

Liathach and part of the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve Picture: Niall Benvie

Jody Harrison

ONE of Scotland's most dramatic and distinctive landscapes has been declared a new National Nature Reserve (NNR).

NatureScot has approved an application from the National Trust for Scotland for Torridon in Wester Ross to be granted NNR status, an accolade reserved for the very best of Scotland's landscapes, habitats and species. It has not been awarded for almost a decade.

The new NNR will cover around 5,100 hectares, stretching from the shoreline of Loch Torridon to the Munro summits of the mountains Beinn Alligin and Liathach.

The vast area is home to a rich tapestry of habitats and species of national and international importance, including native woodlands, rare plants, mosses and lichens, as well as upland birds such as ptarmigan and golden eagles.

Together with NatureScot's neighbouring Beinn Eighe NNR, Torridon is one of the most scenic and popular locations for walking and mountaineering in Scotland.

About 18 miles of well-maintained mountain and low-level paths attract tens of thousands of visitors each year.

The trust has been custodian of Torridon since the late 1960s and has set out an ambitious long-term vision to help nature thrive there over the next 200 years, working in partnership with local communities and landowners.

Philip Long, chief executive of the National Trust for Scotland, said: "Torridon's designation as a National Nature Reserve is a proud moment for the trust and our dedicated team of conservation staff, and it becomes the ninth NNR within our charity's care.

"An NNR designation reflects the significance of the location on both a national and international level, and there's no question that the sublime beauty, ancient history and rich natural heritage of Torridon warrant this accolade.

"The designation of NNR status is also about encouraging people to explore and discover these natural wonders for themselves. Those who don't yet know Torridon will find it to be one of the most beautiful places in the world, with five dramatic Munros on the trust's part of the estate, important native woodland habitats and breathtaking views out to the isles, all watched over by the majestic golden eagle."

Mr Long added: "Our purpose as an organisation is to share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage with everyone, and I do hope that Torridon's new designation as an NNR encourages many more people to explore this precious landscape responsibly and learn about the vital conservation work taking place to protect its future."

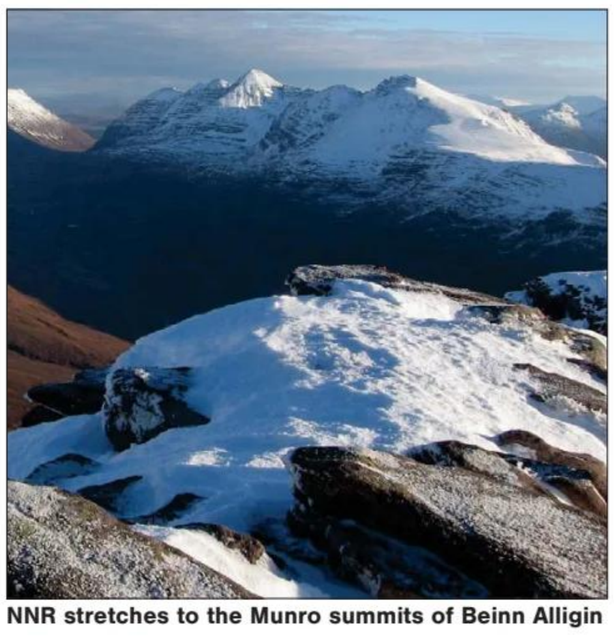
Both the trust and NatureScot are members of the Glen Torridon Partnership, through which landowners in the area, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations and private estates, are working to restore habitats across more than 30,000 hectares.

The trust has consulted widely with the Torridon community while developing its management plan and aspirations for the Torridon NNR.

Torridon is the first National Nature Reserve to be declared in Scotland since 2017, when the trust's Glencoe and Mar Lodge Estate sites were granted the designation.

NatureScot chief executive Nick Halfhide said: "Torridon is one of our finest natural landscapes, a place of outstanding biodiversity and wildlife with boundless opportunities for people to enjoy and connect with nature.

CEO of NTS Philip Long



NNR stretches to the Munro summits of Beinn Alligin

"It is an extremely worthy recipient of National Nature Reserve status, and we look forward to seeing the area continue to flourish.

"Protecting and restoring nature at a landscape scale is vital if we are to meet Scotland's targets to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2030 and see nature recover by 2045.

> "Torridon is one of our finest natural landscapes

"Torridon is a great example of how NNRs can act as crucial building blocks, linking up large areas of land where nature can thrive and working alongside private landowners, NGOs and local communities towards this common goal.

"We are therefore keen to see more nominations for NNR status come forward from across Scotland for the benefit of both nature and communities."

Cause of Hughes' death confirmed

THE son of Manchester United and Wales footballer Mark Hughes died from "sudden adult death syndrome", an inquest has found.

Alex Hughes, 38, was Grimsby Town's player recruitment lead, having previously held roles at clubs including Manchester City, Fulham, Blackburn and 1860 Munich.

Mr Hughes was found collapsed at home in his bedroom in Macclesfield, Cheshire, on June 19 by his sons, an inquest at Cheshire Coroner's Court heard.

Despite resuscitation efforts, the 38-year-old's death was confirmed by paramedics.

Following a post-mortem examination, his death was attributed to "sudden adult death syndrome", also known as Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome (SADS).

SADS is diagnosed when the cause of death cannot be explained in a post-mortem examination because the structure of the heart appears normal.

It affects around 500 people in the UK every year and the British Heart Foundation said SADS "usually happens when a dangerously abnormal heart rhythm goes untreated and leads to a cardiac arrest".

Former striker Mark Hughes said he and his family were "heartbroken" following the sudden death of his son.

Disruption after fire at hospital

OUTPATIENTS face disruption following a fire at a Berwickshire hospital on Wednesday.

NHS Borders has confirmed that a blaze occurred at the Knoll Hospital site in Duns.

The incident was attended by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

An NHS Borders spokesperson said: "As a result of the incident there will be disruption to outpatient clinic services based at the Knoll Hospital site while a full assessment of the building and any damage is carried out.

"Our teams are working to contact affected patients directly regarding their appointments, and we ask patients with outpatient clinic appointments not to attend the site unless they have been specifically advised to do so."

'This is one of the best things Susie McCabe's ever done'

Susie McCabe delivers a fearless, funny, early Fringe standout

Review: Comedy

Susie McCabe: Coming of Rage, Assembly George Square (George Aikman Theatre), Edinburgh Fringe, until August 30 (except August 17)

****

Teddy Jamieson

IN 2025, Susie McCabe came to the Fringe with a show about her heart attack the previous year. Everything is material, right?

Still, she could have been forgiven for hoping that life wasn't always quite so generous. Ah, if only. As the Glasgow comedian tells us at the beginning of her new Fringe show, a near- death experience turned out to just be the "opening ceremony".

In the months that followed the chest pains, her marriage broke up and her dad died.

Those two events are at the heart of her new show Coming of Rage, which, as the title suggests, has a flare of anger at its heart. That anger is directed, for the most part, towards dictators past and present, baby boomers and even Gen Z, though, to be fair, it's the baby boomers who really get it in the neck.

This is a smart, amusing, if at times uncomfortable – certainly for this boomer – part of the show. McCabe is, for all her bonhomie, not afraid of being political.

But really she is at her best when she's talking about her own life. And there's a lot of that in Coming of Rage. Over the course of an hour it takes in dogs, parents, lesbian dating apps, celebrity lesbian dating apps, lesbian dates, living with a Gen Z nephew and McCabe's dad's funeral.

There's also the odd Rangers and Celtic joke, because, well, you know, Glasgow.

McCabe may be the most natural comedian in Scotland right now. She commands the stage from the start, welcomes you in as a confidante and revels in her bolshy bawdiness (at times there's a pleasing vulgarity to it all).

The way she constructs her shows is clever but never showy. And though quietly ambitious, she never strays too far from her primary purpose – which is to make people laugh, which she does, easily and repeatedly.

The climax of the show might be her baby boomer riff, but there's no doubt the highlight of the evening comes earlier when she's recounting events around her dad's funeral.

It may be one of the best things she's ever done – full of love and pain and yet genuinely hilarious. She conjures up a host of characters, including the parish priest, in a few well-chosen words, and paints a picture that pulls life and humour from the darkest of moments. It deserves the best label I can think of to give to any Glasgow comedian. It's "Connollyesque".

Yes, that good.

Loch Tay fish farm expansion raises fears from local group

KAMES Fish Farming has defended plans to expand its Loch Tay fish farm.

The family business submitted an application to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) to double the phosphorus discharge from its fish farm into Loch Tay.

The Loch Tay Association – which represents residents, riparian owners, anglers and other stakeholders around Loch Tay – has strongly objected, saying the proposal poses an "unacceptable risk to a loch that is already under mounting environmental pressure".

Announcing its plans, Kames Fish Farming said it would create two new skilled rural jobs "while increasing the supply of premium Scottish trout".

The proposals are currently being considered by Sepa and the public consultation is open until August 13.

In its objection, The Loch Tay Association said it was "deeply concerned that doubling phosphorus inputs – a key driver of algal blooms and eutrophication – could tip the loch's fragile ecological balance past the point of recovery".

The association's spokesperson Donald Riddell said: "Loch Tay is not just a beautiful stretch of water – it's a living system that supports salmon, brown trout, freshwater pearl mussels and a whole community that depends on a healthy loch.

Loch Tay supports brown trout and other species Picture: Google

"We have already seen algal blooms, anecdotal declines in fish and insect numbers and rising nutrient levels. Doubling the phosphorus permitted from this single source, on top of everything else the loch already absorbs from agriculture, forestry and sewage, is simply too great a risk to take on the strength of modelling alone."

The association is also concerned about public health as Loch Tay has become increasingly popular with wild swimmers, canoeists and paddleboarders.

Kames Fish Farming's managing director Andrew Cannon said the application represented "responsible, science-led growth".

He added: "This is about making better use of an existing farm rather than building new infrastructure. We can produce more healthy Scottish food, create new local employment and improve the resilience of our business, while remaining within the environmental limits of Loch Tay."

The family-owned Scottish business said it had been farming trout "responsibly" for over 50 years and added: "We care deeply about the long-term health of Loch Tay. Healthy water, healthy ecosystems and healthy fish are fundamental to everything we do."

Mr Cannon, said: "We fully respect the right of individuals and organisations to comment on our application. We all share the same objective of protecting Loch Tay for future generations.

"However, it is important that this debate is based on scientific evidence and the independent regulatory process rather than speculation.

"Our application has been developed over many months and is supported by detailed environmental assessment, including independent nutrient modelling undertaken by specialists at the University of Stirling. That work concludes that the proposed increase in production can be accommodated without changing Loch Tay's overall ecological classification under the Water Framework Directive."

Sepa confirmed it was currently reviewing the application. A spokesperson said: "Sepa received an application to increase capacity at Kames Fish Farm on Loch Tay on June 30 and are currently reviewing the application."

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Presenter calls for treatment approval

TV PRESENTER Peter Duncan has called for a "life-changing" and minimally invasive prostate cancer treatment to be accessible across the UK.

The 72-year-old actor and broadcaster, known for hosting Blue Peter in the 1980s, revealed his prostate cancer diagnosis in 2019 and subsequently underwent focal therapy.

The treatment destroys only the cancerous part of the prostate, and studies have proven it successfully delivers long-term outcomes for patients with minimal side effects.

A recent report by researchers at Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare Trust also found that focal therapy is as effective as radiotherapy and prostatectomy surgery.

Prostate Cancer UK has encouraged the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) to review the latest evidence about the treatment as it emphasises the importance of making it widely available.

Duncan has backed the charity in its latest move as he reflected on how focal therapy was a "complete success" for him.

He said: "I was originally offered a radical prostatectomy which would have removed the whole prostate.

"But I was lucky enough to be treated with focal therapy which was better for me and a less invasive option.

"It was a complete success, and I've only experienced very minor after-effects, allowing me to continue with my life as before.

"But as it stands, many men aren't given the same chance I was, and that needs to change."

Focal therapy leads to a fivefold lower risk of side effects such as incontinence, erectile dysfunction and rectal problems compared to traditional radiotherapy or surgery because it only targets the areas of cancer.

Soap star Lawrence in Strictly line-up

EMMERDALE star Lawrence Robb is the latest celebrity announced for Strictly Come Dancing, saying it is a "dream come true".

The actor, from Glasgow, was the 12th star confirmed for the upcoming series on Thursday.

Robb portrays Mackenzie "Mack" Boyd on the ITV soap, a member of the well-known Dingle family.

Before joining Emmerdale, he appeared in the Sky series I Hate Suzie with Billie Piper and starred in Legally Blonde: The Musical on the West End.

Speaking about joining Strictly Come Dancing, Robb said: "I don't know who's more excited about this, me or my mother.

"I can't quite believe that I am going to be getting my dancing shoes on for one of my favourite shows of all time."

Lawrence joins Lacey Turner, Dani Dyer, Delta Goodrem, Chris Appleton, Cach Mercer, Will Best, Dame Sarah Storey, Jaime Winstone, Bethany Antonia, Shaun Wright-Phillips, and Graeme Hall in the 2026 line-up.

The BBC show will also be hosted by three new faces – broadcaster Emma Willis, professional dancer Johannes Radebe and comedian Josh Widdicombe.

The new series premieres on September 19 on BBC One.

Police record 148 assault offences across Bute and Cowal in just four months

NEARLY 150 assault offences were recorded by police in Bute and Cowal in the space of four months, it has been reported.

The figures listed between April 1 and July 28 include 82 common assaults with no injury, 45 common assaults to injury, and five serious assaults. Sixteen offences of assault on police officers or staff were also recorded.

In November 2025, one of the area's police chiefs outlined changes to the way police recorded incidents, meaning there could be multiple complaints recorded in the same incident.

The numbers are listed in a report to go before Argyll and Bute Cowal's Bute and Cowal community planning group at its meeting on August 11.

A spokesperson for Police Scotland said: "All operational officers are briefed daily prior to deployment to furnish them with the intelligence and information required to be able to identify those involved in violence and ASB (antisocial behaviour).

"It is difficult to prevent sporadic acts of violence, particularly indoors in private dwellings. We continue to engage with housing partners to identify problematic neighbour complaints to assess and target ASB which, if left to fester, may escalate to violence.

"We have robust policing plans in place to monitor those individuals released with specific bail conditions. The preventions team are in daily contact with the ASB and housing teams to ensure we maximise our response through a partnership approach.

"Between April 1 and July 28, we have recorded 132 total assault offences against members of the public, comprising 82 common assaults with no injury, 45 common assaults to injury [and] five serious assaults. Additionally, 16 offences of assault on police officers/staff were recorded during this period (15 to no injury and one to injury)."

Chief Inspector James McArthur told the same community planning group in November 2025 of the changes which had resulted in an increase in the reported number of assaults. He said at the time: "Previously, what we would have is a roll-up, which is a police term for when we have multiple offences attributed to one offender, or when you have five or six incidents in the one crime.

"So for example, if you had five cars broken into, you would have one report with five complainers.

"When recording standards changed for Scotland, it became the case that every victim of crime is a stand-alone crime report.

"That makes sense in some respects, but it skews the figures when you have numerous complainers for one incident.

"Because of the way we are recording things now, we are getting an increase in the figures. The assaults are not random attacks on members of the public, and it is important that we get that across."

Who is the university professor at the centre of plagiarism row?

Caroline Wilson

Cambridge professor Jason Arday has resigned amid accusations of plagiarism

Early life and education

Jason Atta Kwei Arday was born in 1985 to Ghanaian parents, the third of four brothers, and grew up in Clapham, south London.

He was diagnosed with autism, global developmental delay and dyslexia and, according to reports, was non-verbal until the age of 11 and could not read or write until he was 18. He also suffers from epilepsy.

Arday undertook his undergraduate degree in education studies with physical education at St Mary's University, Twickenham, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree validated by the University of Surrey in 2008.

He remained to complete a Master of Arts (MA) degree in education and pedagogy and then undertook a postgraduate certificate in education at the Institute of Education. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in education at Liverpool John Moores University.

Arday claimed he had to relearn the content of his dissertation weeks before defending it, following the removal of a benign brain tumour that caused memory loss.

Academic career

Arday has held academic posts at the University of Roehampton and Durham University. In 2021, he was appointed Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Glasgow.

A claim on his biography that he remains a visiting professor at Glasgow University was denied by the institution. Ohio State University also refuted the same claim.

In March 2023, the University of Cambridge announced his appointment as Professor of Sociology of Education, making him the youngest black professor ever appointed at the university.

Controversy

In December 2023, Arday was required to issue a correction in the journal Social Sciences to include more references to two other articles that had been extensively used, but not cited.

Allegations of plagiarism were initially made public in July 2026 in a Substack post by Nathan Cofnas, a Cambridge alumnus, researcher, and self-described "race realist" who was sacked by the institution in 2024.

It followed a backlash to his view that, under a true meritocracy, black people would "disappear from almost all high-profile positions outside of sports and entertainment".

Cofnas's blog post was followed by a Daily Telegraph report alleging that many of Arday's works, including his 2015 PhD thesis, contained similar or identical passages to other academic work.

> "Questions were also raised over biographical assertions

The Times Higher Education is said to have planned to report on the allegations in September 2025, but the article was cancelled after receiving a legal letter from the firm Carter-Ruck on Arday's behalf.

It was further reported that Arday had for several years claimed to have authored a book titled Being Young, Black and Male: Challenging the Dominant Discourse, which had supposedly been published by Palgrave Macmillan. It had, in fact, been abandoned by the publisher years prior and never released

Questions were also raised over biographical assertions, such as his public claim to have run 30 marathons in 35 days, raising £5.5 million for charity. He later altered these claims under scrutiny.

Arday's response to the allegations

Arday has admitted errors in his work, telling The Times in an interview that he was accountable for those mistakes but that "what I am not is a liar".

He told the newspaper: "There has been, since I arrived at Cambridge, a very well-orchestrated and co-ordinated campaign to unseat me from my position".

Arday argued this was "racially motivated" and that he had become a "lightning rod" for criticism of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policy.

The professor said some errors in his early academic work were because of his autism, as he relied on using mimicry to make sense of information, and that similar scrutiny would find similar errors in work by other academics.

Resignation

Arday has stepped down from Cambridge with immediate effect, stating that the relentless media scrutiny, public speculation, and accusations had taken a profound toll on him and his loved ones.

He maintained that the backlash went far beyond standard scholarly disagreement.

The University of Cambridge had earlier announced a formal investigation into his academic history and qualifications.

Concurrently, Jesus College, Cambridge launched its own internal process.

The University of Cambridge had initially described allegations made against Arday as a "vile campaign to undermine his credibility".

Arday said "this is not the end of my work" and that he needed "time to heal".

"When that time comes, I will return," he added.

Blackford road safety concerns as village used as 'rat run' during roadworks

Cllr Steven Carr said the situation is 'horrendous'

USERS of the A9 are being urged not to use a quiet Perthshire village as a "shortcut" to avoid roadworks that are in place until October 30.

Blackford Community Council has repeatedly raised concerns about the impact the ongoing A9 footpath works between Blackford and Loaninghead is having on the village.

One local councillor described the situation as "horrendous", while another fears there could be a fatality and has pleaded with drivers and motorcyclists to simply allow 10 extra minutes for their journey – and potentially save a life.

Amey began essential maintenance works on June 29 – on behalf of Transport Scotland – to improve a section of footpath near Loaninghead petrol station at the A9 northbound off-slip to the A823 for Gleneagles. The works involve resurfacing the footpath between Drumlochy Farm and the junction of the A9 northbound off-slip with the A823.

A 24-hour closure of the northbound inside lane has been in place since June 29 – only temporarily removed during the recent Senior Open at Gleneagles – and the footpath has been completely closed.

Blackford Community Council has repeatedly raised concerns about the impact the works are having on the village.

A spokesperson said: "While we support investment in improving infrastructure, the disruption being experienced by our community cannot simply be ignored. The northbound contraflow is resulting in significant queues, with many drivers diverting through Blackford to avoid delays. This has increased traffic within the village, inconvenienced residents and created unnecessary safety concerns.

"Particularly alarming are reports of motorcyclists using public footpaths to bypass the queues, placing pedestrians at risk. This is clearly unacceptable."

The community council's concerns have been echoed by elected representatives for the Strathallan ward.

Local SNP councillor Steven Carr said: "It's a horrendous situation in Blackford. Vehicles using Blackford as a rat run to avoid queues on the A9 are, as you can imagine, creating safety issues, congestion and frustration for local residents."

He urged the roads authority to address the situation in Blackford "as a matter of urgency" and put the necessary measures in place.

Local Conservative councillor Keith Allan – who contacted Amey to ask why the works are taking four months – described it as "nonsense".

The Strathallan ward councillor said: "Leave an extra 10 minutes for your journey north. That extra 10 minutes, spent driving straight up the A9, just might save a life."

A Perth and Kinross Council spokesperson said: "While we understand the frustration this is causing for residents, it is not possible to segregate local and trunk road traffic on this route.

"We have raised these concerns with Amey."

An Amey spokesperson said: "We would encourage road users to follow the signage through the works site, adhere to speed limits and drive safely and responsibly at all times.

"Additional signs encouraging motorists to use both lanes before the restriction have been introduced."

Phil Nichol's Aren't We Lucky finds its groove after shaky Fringe opening

Review: Comedy

Phil Nichol: Aren't We Lucky, Edinburgh Fringe, Gilded Balloon Teviot (Lounge), until August 30 (except August 17)
***

Teddy Jamieson

AND so it begins. Teatime on the first day of the Edinburgh Fringe and Phil Nichol is already onstage as the audience enters the venue tonight. He's strumming Lou Reed's Perfect Day because, he tells us, he doesn't want to have to pay PRS fees, though we'll learn in time his choice of song is more significant than mere time-filling.

Nichol is going to be a busy guy at this year's Fringe. He's appearing in Owen O'Neill's comic drama 11½ Angry Men at the Pentland Theatre, alongside fellow comedians Andrew Maxwell, Glenn Wool, Stephen K Amos and Fringe debutant Joe Pasquale, and also rebooting his award-winning 2006 show The Naked Racist every night until August 18, also at Gilded Balloon Teviot.

But right now the Scottish-born, Canadian-raised comedian is finding his way in his first brand-new show in seven years.

And it does feel like it needs a little finding. You can't fault it for ambition. It covers some four-and-a-half billion years of life on Earth and in passing touches on Nichol getting engaged in his sixties, his nonagenarian parents, the Clydebank Blitz, his musician friend's leukemia, the life cycle of the cicada insect, the success of some of his fellow comedians and the aforementioned member of The Velvet Underground, now deceased.

It is always a little unfair reviewing a show on the first day of the Fringe. Artists are just getting used to the space (Nichol trips on a step at one point) and getting to grips with new material.

And, in truth, this show does feel rather bitty to start with, with Nichol using all his energy and experience to keep it on track. But as it moves towards its climax, and he is increasingly confident in what he's doing, you can feel it all begin to snap together with a satisfying click. Suddenly it's clear what he's aiming for, and you get a sense of its ambition and appreciate its arc.

When he properly finds his feet you can probably add another star to the rating above.

Because when Aren't We Lucky (no question mark) finds its groove, this is a funny and rather uplifting show that taps into an optimistic notion of life that is maybe more Canadian than Scottish (Canadian readers can let me know if I have this wrong).

In the end, this is a show about luck, the lottery of existence, finding love, and the story of all life on Earth. It may also make you think more highly of Lou Reed than his reputation would allow. That's a lot to pack into an hour. When Nichol works out how to do it, I suspect this show will fly

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More than 200 deaths with suspected weight-loss jabs link reported to regulator

HEALTH officials have received reports of more than 200 deaths suspected of being linked to weight-loss jabs, figures suggest.

Regulators have also received reports of more than 158,000 adverse reactions linked to the popular medications.

If people suspect that an adverse reaction is linked to a medicine, they can report it to the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) Yellow Card Scheme.

Data from the scheme indicate that 106,189 adverse reactions – including gastrointestinal problems – and 120 deaths have been reported to the scheme regarding tirzepatide, which is sold under the brand name Mounjaro.

Some 48,089 reactions and 59 deaths have been reported as being suspected as being linked to semaglutide, which is the active ingredient for the weight-loss drug Wegovy.

Semaglutide is also the active ingredient for diabetes treatments Ozempic and Rybelsus.

Meanwhile, 4,491 adverse reactions and 37 deaths have been reported as being suspected to be linked to liraglutide, which is sold under the brand name Saxenda.

This drug is also used to treat diabetes under different brand names.

The regulator said that adverse reactions and deaths reported to its Yellow Card Scheme did not necessarily mean that the death or the reaction was caused by the medicine, only that the reporter had a suspicion it may have been.

An MHRA spokesperson said: "It is important to place these reports in the context of the millions of GLP-1 prescriptions issued in the UK.

"Reporting volumes can be influenced by increased use, greater awareness of a potential adverse reaction and other factors.

"As with all medicines, the safety of GLP-1s are kept under continual review including emerging evidence from spontaneous data and scientific publications.

"Any potential updates regarding the safety for these medicines would be promptly communicated to patients and healthcare professionals, and appropriate steps taken to mitigate any identified risk.

"On the basis of the current evidence, the benefits of GLP-1 receptor agonists outweigh the potential risks when used in line with their authorised uses."

Fringe show 'honours the memory of my flatmate Kercher', insists Knox

Josh Pizzuto-Pomaco

AMANDA Knox has hit back at critics calling for her Fringe comedy show to be cancelled, saying she is honouring the memory of Meredith Kercher.

Ms Knox, who was wrongfully convicted and later acquitted of the 2007 murder of Ms Kercher, her flatmate, is set to appear at Edinburgh's Gilded Balloon Teviot over the next two weeks in front of a sold-out crowd.

A petition launched by a friend of the Kercher family has criticised Ms Knox's stand up show Cartwheel, suggesting that the performance was a "gross trivialisation" of the British woman's death.

Responding on Instagram, Ms Knox wrote: "Neither the author of this petition nor anyone who signed it has seen Cartwheel. The petition contains many false assumptions and completely mis-characterises the show. Cartwheel honours Meredith Kercher's memory and calls out the violence that was done to her and to me.

"A petition to cancel a show no-one has seen, on the grounds of false accusations intended to shame and vilify a wronged woman into silence, is not an argument against Cartwheel. It's a fairly precise description of what Cartwheel is about and why it deserves to exist."

Ms Knox described Cartwheel as an exploration of motherhood in a world that is "unfair and dangerous for women", adding that the Fringe is "the perfect place" for the show.

Her comments come after Meredith Kercher's sister Stephanie told the BBC that Ms Knox had forced her family to relive the trauma of her sister's death.

"Our family's pain is immense," she said. "I can't explain to you how much pain our family has been through, and also we're talking two decades later now, this pain.

"I think that if it was a generic theme, as many comedy shows are, even when they're pushing the boundaries, it would be different.

"Because this is associated with an individual case and individual person, I think that's where the worry lies here for me, because who else is this going to then open up this opportunity for."

Amanda Knox

However, Ms Knox remarked: "Many of the Fringe's most celebrated comedy shows tackle difficult subjects including grief, trauma, mental health, addiction, illness, identity, and politics.

"Comics rarely treat these experiences lightly or make them the butt of the joke.

"Instead, they use comedy as a way to explore them, creating space for audiences to engage with complex ideas, connect through shared experience, and find moments of relief, perspective and hope in subjects that might otherwise feel overwhelming."

The listing for the show states: "Amanda Knox is approaching 40, juggling motherhood and finally getting around to being furious about the whole wrongful-imprisonment thing. Especially when half the world is telling her to get over it, while the other half still thinks she's guilty.

"How on earth will she explain it all to her daughter, who is now asking to hear the story of "Mama Goes to Italy"? And can she protect her from, well, everything, knowing her own mother couldn't protect her no matter how hard she tried?"

Ms Knox has said that Meredith Kercher would have found her comedy "funny".

Ship shape

Conservationist Lizzie Miller brushes a ship figurehead from the 1800s, on display in the Hull Maritime Museum, which reopens tomorrow following a six-year, £20.4 million redevelopment

Scott Monument celebrates 180 years with free entry to one of city's leading landmarks

Rose Moncur

ONE of Edinburgh's most recognisable landmarks is celebrating a major milestone this summer.

The Scott Monument on Princes Street is marking its 180th anniversary with a series of events, giving residents and visitors the chance to experience the historic structure.

As part of the celebrations, City of Edinburgh Council is offering 12 free tickets each day from August 10 to 17 for visitors wanting to climb the monument's 221 steps.

Those taking part during the anniversary week will also receive a commemorative certificate.

Completed in 1844, the Scott Monument was built in memory of Sir Walter Scott and remains one of the finest examples of Victorian Gothic architecture.

Designed by George Meikle Kemp after he won a public competition in 1838, the monument is known affectionately as the "Gothic Rocket" because of its distinctive design.

Kemp tragically died after drowning in the Union Canal before the monument was completed and never saw his work finished.

The Scott Monument

The structure features statues of writers, poets and characters from Scott's novels, celebrating his influence on Scottish literature and identity.

At the base of the monument is a statue by John Steell showing Sir Walter Scott alongside his dog, Maida.

Sir Walter Scott, who died in 1832, remains one of Scotland's most celebrated literary figures, with works including Waverley continuing to be recognised around the world.

The Scott Monument remains a major feature of Edinburgh's skyline and an important part of the city's cultural heritage.

Councillor Margaret Graham, Culture and Communities Convener at City of Edinburgh Council, said: "The Scott Monument is one of Edinburgh's most iconic landmarks and a much-loved part of our city's heritage.

"I'm delighted to be celebrating its 180th anniversary by giving more people the chance to experience the monument, whether that's climbing to enjoy its spectacular views or learning more about the life and legacy of Sir Walter Scott.

"We hope residents and visitors alike will join us in marking this special milestone."

Queens Of The Stone Age launch complaints hotline

ROCK band Queens Of The Stone Age have launched an unusual complaint hotline which promises fans that their grievances will be "reviewed personally".

The group announced the new service yesterday, which appears to provide callers with the chance of being connected to a member of the band.

The hotline is available 24/7 for callers to leave a message, and directs individuals to an answering machine which asks whether they wish to make a complaint or proceed without one.

Those who wish to air their grievances are encouraged to leave a message, whilst those who do not are told they are "having a good day" before the line disconnects.

The hotline is said to provide a platform for "fans, friends and foes" to air their thoughts, with "a chance that some callers may even find a live ear at the end of the line".

A poster shared on their Instagram page said: "Call the Queens Of The Stone Age complaint hotline and get heard!

"You know better, now's your chance! No bitching too big, no whiny too tiny.

"All complaints are reviewed personally: +1 (760) 437-1966."

The rock group have also encouraged fans to track the status of any complaints made through the hotline across their social media pages.

Queens Of The Stone Age was formed in 1996 by vocalist and guitarist Josh Homme, who leads the current line-up alongside Troy Van Leeuwen, Michael Shuman, Dean Fertita, and Jon Theodore.

The band are famous for hits such as No One Knows, Go With The Flow and Little Sister, and have received eight Grammy nominations and one UK number one album throughout their career.

The rockers are currently touring North America alongside fellow band Foo Fighters, with upcoming dates scheduled in Japan, Singapore, Australia and in Iceland – which marks their first gig in the country in 20 years.

Battle of Trafalgar flag saved for the nation

A ROYAL Navy flag which was flown at the Battle of Trafalgar has been saved for the nation and will be displayed in a museum.

The Union Flag was flown from HMS Royal Sovereign, flagship of Vice-Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, second-in-command to Lord Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805.

It had been due to be sold out of the UK, but an export bar was put in place due to its historical significance, and a fundraising drive was started to save it.

The flag will now be put on view in Newcastle, where Collingwood was born and where many of his men were raised.

Susan Collingwood-Cameron, great, great, great niece of Collingwood, said: "This flag is said to have been made by sailors on board the ship, many of whom came from Tyneside.

"It will be a tribute to them, and the important role they played, in one of our greatest moments in history. There may well be descendants of their families still living in the area."

Measuring 1,525mm by 2,745mm, the flag was hand-stitched in wool bunting and it remains in good condition, although battle scars can be seen on it.

The Battle of Trafalgar was a defining moment in the Napoleonic Wars, and there are just three remaining flags from it.

It was kept as a souvenir by Charles Aubrey Antram, a 17-year-old serving on the ship, and passed down through his family until it came into a private collection.

North East Museums has raised more than two-thirds of its £700,000 fundraising target to purchase the flag and create a permanent home for it at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund supported the bid with a £400,000 grant and further support has come from other organisations, as well as from the Collingwood family.

Nintendo reports Switch 2 profit hike

NINTENDO'S first quarter profit surged 53.5% as the popularity of its recent Super Mario movie worked with solid demand for the Switch 2 gaming console to support the Japanese video-game company's bottom line.

Kyoto-based Nintendo Co yesterday reported 147.4 billion yen (£693 million) in April-June profit, up from 96 billion yen in the same period a year ago.

Quarterly sales dipped 9.5% to 517.8 billion yen (£2.45bn).

Working as a negative for Nintendo, as with many Japanese companies, were US President Donald Trump's tariffs, as well as the rising price of memory chips and other components.

Nintendo is forecasting 310bn yen (£1.48bn) in profit for the full fiscal year through March 2027, down nearly 27% from the previous fiscal year, on annual sales slipping 11% to 2.05 trillion yen (£9.7bn).

Nintendo said sales of Switch 2 machines totalled 3.82 million globally. Nintendo's older Switch business is still holding up, with both console and software sales continuing.

Nintendo shares jumped 2.9% in Tokyo trading after earnings results were announced.

Family's update on stricken Hilton

PEREZ Hilton's family have said he is "able to communicate" after his admission to hospital.

Emergency services were seen outside the celebrity blogger's home in Miami on Tuesday after members of the public reported seeing him self-harm in a TikTok livestream.

His account was suspended minutes later.

A statement from Hilton's family and team said it has been an "incredibly difficult" time for them.

They said: "We have also been able to confirm that Perez is able to communicate, which has given our family hope.

"We respectfully ask for your continued prayers, understanding, and grace as Perez continues to recover. We will share additional updates as we receive confirmed information and are able to do so.

"For now, we're keeping our focus where it belongs, on Perez and his recovery. Your compassionate humanity during this heartbreaking time has meant more than words can express."

Psychedelic found in magic mushrooms 'eases depression'

Storm Newton

A SINGLE dose of the the natural psychedelic found in magic mushrooms could significantly ease depression that is resistant to other treatments, according to a new study.

Symptoms went into remission in four in 10 patients taking part in the first publicly-funded trial of the therapy, which took place in the community rather than a hospital.

One person described the treatment as "very emotional" at times, but said it helped them to understand their depression more.

The trial, led by King's College London and published in Nature Medicine, included 60 people with depression that had not responded to two prior treatments at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.

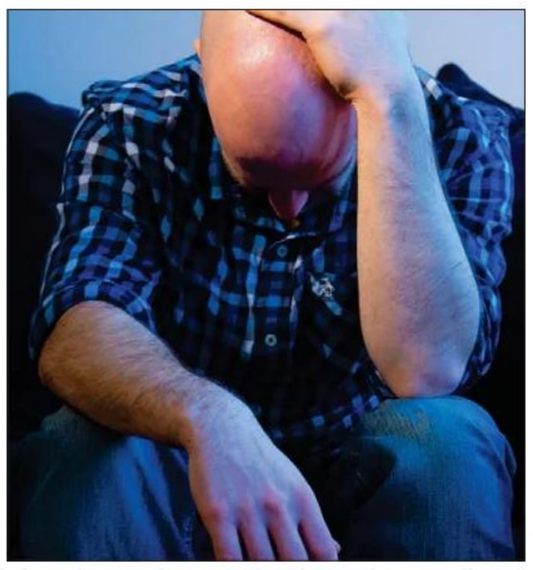
Half were given 25mg of psilocybin, while the other half were given a placebo.

Both groups received psychological support throughout the study.

More than four in 10 people (43%) taking psilocybin met the threshold for treatment response after three weeks, rising to 56% after six weeks.

This is compared to 3% of patients in the placebo group.

Meanwhile, psilocybin helped 40% of patients enter remission, meaning their symptoms of depression fell low enough to no longer meet clinical criteria, within three weeks compared to 3% in the placebo group.



The study found taking the mushrooms treatment could help in patients resisant to other depression remedies

Remission was sustained at six weeks, the trial found.

Professor James Rucker, of King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) and consultant psychiatrist at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Here, we show that a randomised trial design of psilocybin compared to a true placebo was feasible in participants who had often failed many different types of treatment.

> "It got very intense two or three times

"People who were randomised to receive a dose of 25mg of psilocybin were much more likely to improve than those who were randomised to placebo up to six weeks of follow up.

"As is often the case in clinical depression, individual responses were very variable and some of the difference seen between groups will be due to non-drug factors.

"Publicly funded clinical trials are an important part of the jigsaw of evidence needed for a new intervention to find its place in the real world.

"Meanwhile, the wider evidence base for psilocybin therapy is growing rapidly, and looks increasingly promising."

One patient said: "It got very intense two or three times... one part that got very emotional for me, I felt like I was in a ribcage of some sort and in that I saw my dad holding my sister and that image stays with me because those are two people I have lost.

"I felt like it was a way of them saying we are here and that was definitely a point of emotional release.

"I think afterwards I felt pretty tired and broken. It has taken me a while to reflect and I think it just helped me understand my depression more and just 'feel' my feelings – I think I am glad I did it.

"It was very difficult – very painful – but I think that was what I needed and it came at the right time."

Recruitment for the trial started at a research facility before moving to a community mental health building.

Catherine Bird, senior clinical trials manager at the IoPPN, said the move shows "psilocybin, unlike many psychiatric drugs, can be administered safely outside a hospital ward" and requires a "calm, supported environment and trained staff rather than medical monitoring".

Prof Rucker added: "This trial makes a strong case for larger publicly-funded trials of psilocybin therapy in community settings, which are often more convenient and less anxiety-provoking than hospital settings."

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

Notice is hereby given that Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited, ("the Company") with company registration number 13633932, having its registered office at 2nd Floor, 36 Broadway, London, England, SW1H 0BH has applied to the Scottish Ministers for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate a wind farm known as Invercassley, approximately 4.5km northwest of Rosehall, Sutherland (National Grid Reference (NGR) NC 40951 05254. The installed capacity of the proposed generating station is anticipated to be 144MW comprised of 20 wind turbines, 18 with a maximum ground to blade tip height of 230 metres and 2 with a maximum ground to blade tip height of 200 metres. The proposed development is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an EIA Report has been produced.

The Company has also requested a direction under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted.

A copy of the application, with a plan showing the land to which it relates, together with a copy of the EIA Report discussing the Company's proposals in more detail and presenting an analysis of the environmental implications, are available for public inspection in person, free of charge, during normal office hours at:

Location	Opening hours	Address
Lairg Library	Monday: 10:00 - 14:00 Tuesday: 12:00 - 15.30, 16:00- 19:00 Thursday: 10:00 - 14:00 Friday: 12:00 - 15:00	The Main Street Lairg Sutherland IV27 4DD
The Highland Council Headquarters	Monday: 08:00 – 16:00 Tuesday: 08:00 – 16:00 Wednesday: 08:00 – 16:00 Thursday: 08:00 – 16:00 Friday: 08:00 – 16:00	Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX

The EIA Report can also be viewed on the application website at https://invercassleywindfarm.co.uk/; or at www.energyconsents.scot under application reference ECU00006064.

Copies of the EIA Report may be obtained from Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited (communities@fredolsen.com) at a charge of £2,000 per hard copy and £15 on USB storage device. Copies of a short Non-Technical Summary are available free of charge.

Any representations on the application may be submitted via www.energyconsents.scot, using the relevant Project Name and/or ECU reference number. Please note that you must be in possession of a working email address to submit a representation virtually.

If you would prefer to submit your representation by post, please send to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation. Written representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals) and full postal address of those making representations.

All representations should be received not later than **14 September 2026.** Scottish Ministers may be able to consider representations received after this date.

Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the developer will be subject to further public notice in this manner, and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

Where Scottish Ministers are required to, or decide to exercise their discretion to do so, they can cause a public inquiry to be held.

Following examination of the environmental information, Scottish Ministers will determine the application for consent in one of two ways:

- consent the proposal, with or without conditions attached; or
- reject the proposal

General Data Protection Regulations

The Scottish Government processes representations under the Electricity Act 1989. To support transparency in decision making, the Scottish Government publishes online at www.energyconsents.scot.

A privacy notice is published on the Help page at www.energyconsents.scot. This explains how the Scottish Government processes your personal information. If you have any concerns about the processing of your personal information by the Scottish Government, please email Econsents_Admin@gov.scot or write to Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU.

TRAFFIC & Roads

IN THE SHERIFF COURT AT PAISLEY
Court Reference: PAI-B345-26
In the Petition of
VIJAYAKUMARAN RAJENDRAN
For the Restoration of PROFOST CONSULTING UK LTD
Company Number: SC690261

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition has been presented to the Sheriff at Paisley by Vijayakumaran Rajendran seeking an Order under the Companies Act 2006 for the restoration of PROFOST CONSULTING UK LTD (Company Number: SC690261) to the Register of Companies.

By First Deliverance dated 13 July 2026, Sheriff Millar appointed notice of the import of the Petition and Deliverance to be advertised once in The Herald.

Any person claiming an interest who intends to show cause why the Petition should not be granted must lodge Answers with the Sheriff Clerk at Paisley Sheriff Court, Sheriff Court House, St James Street, Paisley PA3 2HW, within eight days after such intimation, service or advertisement.

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Paint playtime

Children throw paint into the air during Playday in Wrexham, an annual UK-wide celebration of children's right to play, marking the submission of the Wrecsam2029's bid for UK City of Culture 2029 to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

New opportunities for Irvine to strengthen the Auld Alliance

A REVIVED community group is inviting people across Irvine to reach across the sea to help forge new friendships, cultural exchange and travel through the town's longstanding twinning links with France.

The newly-formed Irvine Exchange Collective has been established to revive and strengthen the north Ayrshire town's partnership with the picturesque French town of Voisins-le-Bretonneux, situated just a few kilometres from the celebrated Palace of Versailles on the outskirts of Paris.

They will be showcasing the opportunities they have on offer at the Marymass Festival later this month.

Over the years, many people from Irvine have visited Voisins-le-Bretonneux, returning home with memories, lifelong friendships and a greater appreciation of French culture. The committee hopes to build on this success by encouraging local clubs, schools, sports organisations and community groups to establish new links with their French counterparts.

A spokesperson for the Irvine Exchange Collective said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for people of all ages to experience another culture, make new friends and create lasting memories.

"Whether you're part of a sports club, a school, a community group or simply interested in cultural exchange, we'd love to hear from you.

"Our friends in Voisins-le-Bretonneux are looking forward to welcoming visitors from Irvine once again."

Runners from Irvine at a reception after the annual spring race

The committee will be attending Marymass Saturday, August 22 on the Moor, where visitors can meet members, learn more about the twinning programme and discover the many opportunities available for organisations that want to get involved.

One of the most successful exchanges in recent years has involved members of the Irvine Running Club, whose members have travelled to France to take part in an annual spring race.

Those visits have resulted in enduring friendships and have highlighted the true value of international community links.

The group has travelled to France over for the last four years and been "made so welcome by the Twinning association", stating that anybody who would like to enter a 6km or 15km race there would be made very welcome.

The organisers said: "They have so many different organisations – from sewing to craft to rambling to cycling to tennis – that any group that would like to experience French hospitality and meet up with other like-minded groups should get in touch.

The Irvine Exchange Collective is keen to hear from any organisations interested in becoming involved and helping to strengthen the special relationship between Irvine and Voisins-le-Bretonneux.

For more information, or to discuss how your group can take part, contact info@irvineexchangecollective.co.uk.

The two Iranian footballers

Australia grants citizenship to Iranian footballers who sought asylum

Australia

TWO members of the Iranian women's football team who claimed asylum in Australia in March have been granted citizenship.

Fatemeh Pasandideh and Atefeh Ramezanisadeh said in a statement yesterday that immigration minister Tony Burke swore them in the day before at a citizenship ceremony in their Australian home city of Brisbane.

Friends and supporters from the local Iranian community attended the ceremony. "Yesterday was a truly special and unforgettable day for me. I feel proud and deeply grateful to become an Australian citizen. Australia has given me the opportunity to build my life and my future, and I feel, more than ever, that I belong here," Ms Ramezanisadeh said in the statement.

She said her Iranian roots and memories would always be part of her.

Meanwhile, Ms Pasandideh said Wednesday had been "one of the happiest days of my life".

"I'm incredibly proud and grateful to officially become an Australian citizen. After everything we've been through and all the challenges we faced, this moment means more than words can express," Ms Pasandideh said.

When The Associated Press asked Mr Burke's office for an explanation for why the women's citizenship was fast-tracked, his department said it could not comment on individual cases for privacy reasons.

The Refugee Council of Australia, a non-profit umbrella organisation representing asylum-seekers, said refugees usually must live in Australia on a valid visa for four years before they can apply for citizenship.

Their citizenship could potentially have been fast-tracked under Australian law to make them eligible to play football for Australia.

The Iranians joined Brisbane Roar, a team which plays in Australia's elite A-League Women's domestic competition, after they were granted asylum when Iran dropped out of the Women's Asia Cup that Australia hosted.

They were among seven Iranian women who initially accepted asylum, but five changed their minds within days and returned to the team for reasons undisclosed. The team had arrived in Australia before the United States and Israel attacked Iran in February.

US President Donald Trump used social media to call for the team to be granted asylum and telephoned Australian prime minister Anthony Albanese on the issue.

Candle-lit paper lanterns are floated on the Motoyasu River in front of the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima

A boy lights incense sticks before praying Pictures: AP

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the ceremony

Hiroshima marks atomic bomb anniversary amid nuclear fears

Japan

HIROSHIMA has marked the 81st anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the western Japanese city, with its mayor criticising major powers for waging wars and urging them to stop justifying the possession of nuclear weapons as a method of deterrence.

"Downplaying the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and accepting the use of force to pursue one's own prosperity risk cycles of violent retaliation that could ultimately result in another Hiroshima or Nagasaki," Mayor Kazumi Matsui said.

Too many political leaders still consider nuclear deterrence a realistic approach and legitimise violence, which "simply pushes a world without nuclear weapons further into the distance," Mr Matsui said in his peace declaration at the ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

He also called on each citizen to learn lessons from the past and take action.

About 50,000 people, including representatives from some 120 countries and regions including the United States and Iran, were to attend the ceremony.

A minute of silence was held while a peace bell rang out at 8.15am, the time when a US B-29 dropped the bomb on the city on August 6, 1945.

Sanae Takaichi, who attended the memorial for the first time as Prime Minister, said she will take "a realistic approach" toward achieving a world where nuclear weapons are never used, within the framework of the United Nations' treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

This year's ceremony comes at a time of looming speculation that Ms Takaichi's hawkish government, which supports the idea of nuclear deterrence, may ease Japan's postwar three non-nuclear principles when it compiles new security and defence documents later this year.

Ms Takaichi has advocated a review of the principles for a possibility of dropping the third one

> "Even after the darkest moments, we can choose a different future

– of not permitting nuclear weapons to be brought into the country.

Ms Takaichi said Japan has maintained its post-war three non-nuclear principles, but fell short of expressing commitment for sticking with that policy into the future.

Survivors have expressed frustration and worry over growing support for the possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence by the international community, including Japan.

Japan is under the protection of US nuclear umbrella and has repeatedly sought Washington's reassurance for its commitment and a stronger protection.

Because of that, Japan's government has rejected the survivors' request to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or attend its meetings as observers.

The bombing of Hiroshima destroyed the city and killed 140,000 people.

A second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000.

Japan surrendered on August 15, ending the Second World War and Japan's nearly half-century of aggression in Asia.

The number of survivors has fallen to 91,105, about a quarter of the original number, with their average age exceeding 86.

Survivors worry about fading memories, as the youngest of the survivors were too young to clearly recall the attack.

"The horror of nuclear weapons is just one lesson of Hiroshima. Another is the need to build a world in which the threat or use of these weapons becomes unthinkable," United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres said in a written statement.

"Hiroshima stands as an inspiring example of resilience, renewal and hope.

"Across generations, its people remind us that, even after the darkest moments, we can choose – and build – a different future," he said, calling for "dialogue over division, cooperation over confrontation and common security over narrow advantage."

Ukraine strikes target more oil facilities inside Russia, Zelenskyy says

The aftermath of an attack in Sumy, Ukraine

Ukraine

UKRAINE hit more oil facilities deep inside Russia in night-time attacks, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said as Kyiv kept up its campaign to undermine Moscow's wartime economy and embarrass the Kremlin.

The repeated strikes have caused fuel shortages and rattled Russians while heartening Ukrainians who are enduring regular Russian barrages that Kyiv's weakened air defences are struggling to counter.

Ukrainian forces hit a refinery in Bashkortostan, more than 800 miles behind the frontline in eastern Ukraine, as well as a refinery in the Yaroslavl region, almost 400 miles from the Ukrainian border, Mr Zelenskyy said on social media.

Also, Ukrainian forces hit two Russian military patrol boats in the Black Sea, according to Mr Zelenskyy, as well as vessels belonging to Moscow's so-called shadow fleet, which Russia uses to evade Western restrictions on its oil exports.

He did not provide details about the vessels or the extent of the damage.

The Russian Defence Ministry said that its air defences overnight shot down 605 Ukrainian drones over a number of Russian regions, as well as illegally annexed Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Meanwhile, Russian drone and glide bomb attacks across Ukraine during the night killed at least three civilians and wounded 22 others, authorities said yesterday, as countries helping Kyiv resist Russia's invasion scrambled to find more vital air defences for its fight.

Moscow's forces have in recent weeks pummelled Ukraine with ballistic missiles that Kyiv officials say only the US-made Patriot air defence system can stop.

But the Iran war has drained stocks of Patriot interceptor missiles, leaving Ukraine at the mercy of Russian bombardments that seek to exploit its weakened aerial defences.

"We are working as hard as possible with all partners who can assist with the supply of interceptor missiles to protect against such insane Russian strikes targeting life, people, and civilian facilities," Mr Zelenskyy said on social media on Wednesday after a Russian barrage killed 17 people in the Kyiv region.

He said he had spoken to Nato chief Mark Rutte and Finnish president Alexander Stubb about urgently procuring interceptors from stockpiles.

Mr Zelenskyy said he and Mr Rutte "co-ordinated our efforts regarding countries that have the necessary missiles and the capacity to help".

"It is important to cut through all red tape," Mr Zelenskyy said.

Russia appears determined to exhaust Ukraine through sheer weight of numbers in terms of soldiers, armour and weapons.

Russian president Vladimir Putin thinks time is on his side, that Western support will fade and that Ukraine's resistance will eventually collapse under pressure, Western analysts and officials say.

It fired four missiles and 101 long-range strike drones at Ukraine from Wednesday into yesterday, Ukraine's air force said, with air defences shooting down or jamming 66 drones.

Three people were killed in Balakliia in the northeastern Kharkiv region, according to Vitalii Karabanov, head of the city's military administration.

A first strike hit a home, killing a woman and starting a fire, he said, while a second strike killed a man and a woman.

In the neighbouring Sumy region, Russian glide bombs wounded 12 people, the National Police said.

Apartment buildings and infrastructure were damaged near the impact sites, regional military administration chief Oleh Hryhorov said.

In Brief

First Israeli deaths since Hezbollah truce

Israel: Israeli prosecutors yesterday charged a settler for the killing of a Palestinian community leader last year in the occupied West Bank, according to an indictment filed in district court.

In the document, prosecutors accuse Yinon Levi, who lives in the south of the West Bank, of reckless manslaughter in the death of prominent Palestinian activist Awdah Hathaleen in July 2025.

The charge holds a lesser punishment than murder under Israeli law. The indictment also charges Levi with armed trespassing and malicious property damage.

It is extremely rare for Israel to charge settlers with violence against Palestinians.

South Korea: North Korea launched a short-range ballistic missile towards the sea yesterday, South Korea's military said.

The launch from North Korea's eastern coastal Wonsan area was detected around 5pm, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, explaining that South Korea's military has bolstered its surveillance posture and is closely co-ordinating with the US and Japan.

Japan's Defence Ministry also said North Korea fired a possible ballistic missile but there was no impact in or around Japan, where the coast guard urged ships around the coast to use caution and notify authorities if any fallen objects were found.

The ballistic missile launch was North Korea's first since late June, when it tested a tactical ballistic missile with a "special mission" warhead and other weapons.

Yesterday launch also came ahead of large-scale, annual exercises to be conducted by the US and South Korean militaries later this month.

Lebanon: The Israeli military said yesterday that two of its soldiers were killed in combat in southern Lebanon in the first Israeli deaths since the implementation of a shaky truce between Israel and the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah in June.

Four other soldiers were wounded, the military said. The deaths had been reported by Israeli media a day earlier. There was no immediate statement from Hezbollah.

The Israeli army launched strikes on Wednesday in southern Lebanon in response to what it described as Hezbollah's violation of the ceasefire and issued a call for residents of the village of Mansouri to flee.

Cameroon: President Paul Biya reached two months since the last time he was inside the borders of his country, a prolonged absence that has raised concerns for his health and criticisms about a possible power vacuum in the Central African nation.

The world's oldest president, who has led Cameroon since 1982, began his eighth term in office after winning a widely disputed election in November.

But the 93-year-old left the country on June 9 for what Mr Biya's office described as "a brief private stay in Europe" that has become one of his longest trips overseas.

The health of the president has long been a topic of speculation as he spends significant time in Europe, including France and Switzerland, where he often spends weeks while leaving governance to key party officials and family members.

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The SNP has hoarded power in Scotland's central belt – Labour must break its grip

ANDY MACIVER

IT is a constant surprise to me that politicians almost never ask themselves what their opponents do not want them to do. I have been advising, observing and critiquing politicians for 25 years now, and it remains remarkably rare, particularly for opposition politicians, to lift up their heads before they create strategy or policy. More often than not, decisions are made based on what they think will work with 'their people', appealing to the core vote, rather than making a fist of trying to grow it.

The opportunity to lift the head and think about what would give its opponent a problem now exists for the Labour party in Scotland. Despite its lowly position in a distant joint-second place in the Scottish Parliament, Labour remains the realistic alternative to the SNP government.

Reform appears to have made the decision to be Nigel Farage's parrot in Scotland, which places above them a very low and impenetrable ceiling. The Greens' message is increasingly a left-wing version of the government's, and there is no particular evidence that there are enough voters over there to cause any trouble. The Tories are dead from the neck up. And, although the Liberal Democrats have the potential to be the most interesting and fastest-growing force, their base is low enough that Labour can still consider itself to be in pole position.

So, all eyes are on Labour. The party will soon have new leadership in Scotland to work with its new leadership in London, which will give it a natural platform to offer a change in strategy and a change in message. With it they should ask themselves that fundamental question: what does the SNP not want us to do?

The answer to the question is not engaging in the sort of hand-to-hand combat which has been as much a feature of Labour's short time in office as it was of the long Tory spell which preceded it. The problem with hating the SNP is that it tends to cloud your strategic judgement, and the antagonistic, aggressive approach taken by the UK government towards its Scottish counterpart has largely played into the hands of the latter, despite perhaps making the former feel better about themselves.

There is a much cuter, more subtle path to take. Most likely, that path goes in the direction of devolution within Scotland.

It has become a common refrain to suggest that "devolution stopped in Edinburgh", but overused as that refrain may be, it does not prevent it from being true. One of the quietest, but most successful, nationalist strategies of our time is to suppress regionalism and localism in favour of a 'one Scotland' approach. The SNP has constantly emphasised the homogeneity of Scotland in an ultimately fruitful effort to persuade us that we are all in this together against Westminster.

Step in Mr Burnham and co, for whom there is a gap

This is wearing thin, now. The central belt, and Glasgow in particular, have long received an outsized focus in policy discussion and implementation. But in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway to the south, round to the west coast and the Highlands and Islands, and back all the way through Aberdeenshire to Tayside, conurbations and communities feel very, very far away from power.

Last week the irrepressible Angus Macdonald, Liberal Democrat MP for Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire, published a report on the cost of living in the Highlands which exposed the sort of institutional unfairness which results from structurally weak representation. Fuel poverty is rife, the cost of living is absurdly high and, no surprise, the population is significantly ageing.

The elevation of John Swinney to the office of First Minister has no doubt helped the SNP appear more aware of life outside the central belt, but Mr Swinney himself is far from a natural decentraliser, and he therefore leaves the door open for people who are.

Step in Mr Burnham and co, for whom there is a gap. What should they do? Firstly, and with Mr Macdonald's report in mind, they should look at the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. A post-Brexit creation designed to replace European Regional Development Funding, it has used its flexibility to remove money from rural Scotland rather than pushing more money towards it. Mr Macdonald estimates the deficit to be 60 per cent, a figure corroborated by the Scottish Government.

Building infrastructure and branding it "Built by the UK Government" with a Union Flag might sound crass, but it is precisely what the EU did for 50 years and was lauded for.

Perhaps more importantly, though, are the structural options open to Mr Burnham and his Holyrood counterpart. The Prime Minister is, with some justification, accused of possessing a large deposit of vibes without tremendous substance, but one clear vision nobody can deny is that he is a decentraliser. The next Labour leader in Scotland must persuade him that this decentralisation should go beyond Manchester, which may be "north" from a seat at Westminster but is hardly north where we sit here in Scotland.

He is right in his view that Glasgow and Edinburgh need mayors. For different reasons and with different effects, these are dramatically underperforming cities whose locally elected councils lack vision. A directly elected mayor with a vision and a mandate is what they need to achieve their potential.

But regionalism and localism must go further. We have other "metro" candidates – Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth and Dundee. And we have other large regions which have a level of potential which their structural representation does not allow them to fulfil – Fife, the Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Highland, and each of the islands. The Scottish Government is not particularly popular, with an approval rating of around 25%. Similarly, people far from the central belt power base feel they are ignored (Mr Macdonald reckons almost 80% think politicians don't understand their needs).

Mr Burnham and Labour's new Scottish leader can nudge in this direction. And, of course, if nudging is not enough, he has the power to enforce.

The SNP has an incredibly strong power base at Holyrood and St Andrew's House. The last thing they want is to relinquish any of it. That's precisely why Labour should have it as the central plank of its Scotland strategy.

Andy Maciver is Founding Director of Message Matters, and co-host of the Holyrood Sources podcast

UNSPUN

Is it time for us all to pay a little more tax?

ANDREW LEARMONTH

OVER the last fortnight or so Dan Neidle and Laurie Macfarlane have been going back and forth over whether Scotland's 48p top rate of income tax has lost the public purse £22 million, or £9 million , or nothing at all, or possibly made money.

Neidle says the data shows high earners quietly shuffling their income out of Scotland's reach.

Macfarlane says the data is far too volatile to say anything of the sort with any confidence, and that Neidle's "loss" evaporates the moment you allow for the fact that Scottish and UK top incomes have never moved in lockstep anyway.

It has been a robust debate and I recommend you seek out and read their blogs and listen to the interviews on the ever-excellent Holyrood Sources.

What's interesting is what they agree on. Both say that whatever the true number is, it's trivial.

Set against a Scottish Budget of roughly £60 billion, £22m is a rounding error. So, for what it is worth, was the £8m the Scottish Fiscal Commission expected the 48p rate to raise in the first place.

And Scotland is not looking at a £22m problem, but rather a £4.7bn problem.

That's the gap the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC) forecasts between ministers' spending commitments and the funds it expects to be available by 2029-30.

Some £2.6bn of that is on the day-to-day budget, which covers the running costs of most public services, salaries and some welfare benefits.

As Macfarlane writes: "Without substantial additional revenue, deep cuts to frontline public services are unavoidable. One thing is clear: Scotland can't close that gap by taxing high earners alone. There are simply not enough of them."

Raising the sums required, he adds, "means confronting an uncomfortable truth: most Scots will need to pay a little more".

If Scotland wants Nordic-style public services, at some point it has to accept something closer to Nordic-style tax.

Macfarlane and his think tank, Future Economy Scotland, have been making a version of this argument for a while.

We are not, on any serious international measure, a high-tax nation.

On the OECD's measure, total UK tax revenue – income tax, National Insurance, VAT, the lot – came to around 34.4% of GDP in 2024, almost exactly the OECD average of 34.1%.

Eurostat's equivalent figure for the EU as a whole was over 41% of GDP, with France, Belgium and Austria all above

43%. And in the Nordic countries Denmark is above 45%, with Sweden and Finland not far behind.

Scotland taxes its highest earners more than anywhere else in the UK, but maybe, Future Economy Scotland argues in Funding Scotland's Future: Tax Reform for a Just Transition, it needs to start asking for more from its middle earners too.

Currently, Scots earning under £33,493 pay up to £40 less than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK, while those earning over this threshold pay more.

Furthermore, approximately 32% of adults in Scotland pay no income tax at all because they earn below the UK-wide Personal Allowance threshold of £12,570.

The report, which came out in February, models a one percentage point rise on the lowest three bands, taking Starter to 20%, Basic to 21%, Intermediate to 22%.

Meanwhile, the highest three bands go up by two percentage points, Higher to 44%, Advanced to 47%, Top to 50%.

Doing all this and lowering the Higher rate threshold from £43,663 to £40,000 would, the think tank estimates, raise an additional £1.5bn per year after accounting for behavioural responses.

The 1.5 million lowest-earning Scots would be entirely unaffected, as they earn below the Personal Allowance, while households near the median income would lose an average of £29 a year.

The richest 20% of households would face the largest cash and proportional impacts, losing over 2% of their disposable income.

Interestingly, the reforms are not a million miles away from what Scottish Labour suggested ahead during Kezia Dugdale's time in charge, with a flat 1p rise on income tax for everyone earning above £21,500.

It is, however, unlikely that Dugdale's wife, Jenny Gilruth, will make a similar argument when she stands up at the end of the year to deliver her first budget.

In their manifesto, the SNP pledged to freeze income tax for the next five years, with First Minister John Swinney insisting there would be no increase in the number of bands or their rates over the lifetime of the parliament.

"That's an assurance that I can confidently give to the electorate in Scotland," he said.

What we can almost certainly expect instead are the stealth taxes that both the Scottish and UK governments have quietly relied on for years.

Freezing thresholds and letting inflation do the dirty work raises money just as surely, but will it raise enough to plug the gap?

It also risks not having the argument about tax that a mature democracy ought to be capable of having in public.

The sort of argument we've seen Neidle and Macfarlane have in recent days.

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MARISSA MACWHIRTER

The bizarre Jason Arday saga shows our universities have lost the plot

YOU would expect any reasonable student or staff member at Cambridge University to understand the modern proverb, "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is".

But the sensational life story of Professor Jason Arday, apparently, was just too good for the university's public relations department. So good, it appears no one thought to question the truth of his incredible tale (or, in some cases, his academic output).

I find this deeply concerning, as Cambridge University sells itself as "one of the best universities in the world", one that contributes to society "through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence".

The proverb is actually codified in their own Cambridge Dictionary, which defines the saying as "so good that it is hard to believe, or seeming very good but not real". The phrase also appears on the university's official "How to recognise a scam" page: "If something seems too good to be true, it probably is." No matter.

The story, set to be published by Simon & Schuster as a memoir (Great and Unfortunate Things), goes like this. Jason Arday was born in 1985 and grew up on a council estate in Clapham, south London. He says he was diagnosed with autism and was non-verbal until the age of 11, and that he didn't learn to read or write until he was 18.

He went on to attend university, completing a PhD in education while, according to his own account, living with a benign brain tumour. In 2021, Arday was appointed Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Glasgow, widely described at the time in university and media profiles as making him one of the youngest professors in the UK.

Now, 2021 was a pivotal time for UK universities. They were cementing into policy promises they had made to confront structural racism in the wake of global Black Lives Matter protests. Arday's professorship was framed as part of a wider (much-needed) reckoning, but in a hurry to prove that they were listening, some universities overshot the mark. They treated one spectacular life narrative as if it could magically stand in for the slow work of truly changing hiring culture and how claims are checked.

In 2023, Cambridge University made international headlines when they appointed Arday professor of sociology of education, announcing him, at 37, as the youngest Black person ever appointed to a professorship in the university's history. The academic's incredible tale does not stop there. Woven into the story are claims he was a semi-professional footballer and a snooker prodigy. Arday also claims that around age 24, he ran 30 marathons in 35 days – nine with a broken leg. He allegedly ran 300 miles in three days and 600 miles in six days in 2015 (a claim later softened on some university websites to 600 miles in 12 days, after subtle edits).

Oh, Arday also claimed to have raised more than £5 million, and later £5.5 million, for more than 70 charities, that he appeared in ITV's Seven Up documentary series, and that he endured racial harassment so severe that bananas and bullets were posted to his office, a masked man wielding a knife came to his Cambridge workplace, and a severed pig's head was left at his parents' door.

Under scrutiny (from journalists, not Cambridge), details of Arday's life have been contested. Ultra-distance runners and experts told reporters they had never heard of him despite the feats he described, and questioned whether an unknown amateur could plausibly run 300 miles in three days or 600 miles in six. He later told The Times that the charity cash he claimed to have raised was not all raised by him personally but was actually part of a syndicate of around 100 people he couldn't name because of non-disclosure agreements, and he couldn't possibly have taken part in Seven Up because the series began two decades before Arday was born and a BBC spokesman ruled out his appearance in later spin-offs. This is not an exhaustive list of claims.

The Guardian reported that when it checked Jason Arday's account of a severed pig's head delivered to his parents' home and a masked, knife-wielding intruder at his Cambridge faculty, the Metropolitan Police said his description of their investigation was "categorically" incorrect and that no such investigation had taken place, and that local butchers named by Arday said no officers had ever come in to ask them about a pig. Other outlets have similarly reported that police could find no record of such an investigation or of visits to the butchers he named.

When allegations of plagiarism and biographical fabrication started to emerge, Liverpool John Moores University, which awarded his doctorate, said its review found "honest and reasonable error" rather than misconduct. Cambridge at first stressed that internal and journal investigations had cleared him, with some reports citing university sources who described the attacks as a "vile campaign" against his credibility. Supporters' letters cited those university and journal investigations as finding "no evidence whatsoever of wrongdoing".

But this week, Cambridge finally announced that it had "begun an investigation following new information" about his academic qualifications and honorary appointments. The same evening, Arday resigned "with immediate effect" from Cambridge and Jesus College via an open letter posted by the Good Law Project, saying he needed "time to heal" and framing his departure as a response to relentless scrutiny rather than an acceptance of the allegations. There has been social-media speculation that the letter was AI-written.

Cambridge's handling of this is straight out of the corporate PR handbook, treating the story as a reputational threat and a message to be controlled rather than a question of a truth to be examined. The university took this LinkedIn-coded "journey" narrative at face value, never questioning it, then tried to walk it back in the heat of bad press. Which is symptomatic of the widespread crisis in UK universities, where the PR departments have replaced the brain departments.

They didn't care about Arday, they wanted the story. An origin tale that they pumped out across websites and media interviews and repeated as institutional biography like copy-and-paste LinkedIn copy.

As journalist Ben Ryan discovered, Cambridge and other institutions subtly edited Arday's online bios to take out a contested degree, tone down his claimed marathon feats (for example changing "600 miles in six days" to "600 miles in 12 days") and remove or soften specific fundraising figures, and the disputed claim that he was a visiting professor at Glasgow University (a title Glasgow said he never held). This scandal is a reputational crisis for Cambridge more than anything. What does it say about society that LinkedIn logic has seeped so deeply into the culture that the highest-status universities have been reduced to brands looking for engagement? Whenever a university chair at Cambridge or Glasgow is boasting about a new hire, I'm going to think it's because it boosts the brand image, not that the person is an outstanding academic.

It's bonkers that Cambridge seems to check its spokesperson statements and press releases more rigorously than the backgrounds of its staff. The damage is not just to one man's career, or the careers of academics from minority ethnic, working class, or neurodivergent backgrounds.

It completely erodes the perceived seriousness of universities as public, truth-seeking and making institutions. It will take a lot to convince me that Cambridge is serious anymore.

The greatest irony of all is now they need their PR department more than ever. Each time I check my phone, another angle to the Jason Arday palaver has gone live. I can only imagine the screeds of response requests their media team is typing their way through as you read.

In a gesture of goodwill, I popped a statement into the LinkedIn translator to help Cambridge out: "Thrilled to share a major paradigm shift in my worldview today! Huge thanks to Jason Arday for facilitating a deep-dive into the timeless wisdom: "If something seems too good to be true, it probably is."

This isn't just a proverb—it's a core framework for risk assessment, due diligence, and strategic decision-making. Sometimes the most valuable lessons come from reframing the obvious.

Who else has had a "too good to be true" moment that turned into a growth opportunity?

EVA MILNE

We are often told that graduates need to work harder, gain more experience or make better choices

Graduation was supposed to bring independence. Instead, I moved home

MY independence is currently in storage.

Somewhere between the boxes of books, kitchen equipment, and assorted crap I have accumulated over four years of university, it made the journey back home.

Which (apparently) puts me in good company.

This week, the BBC reported that more than 40% of 25-year-olds are living with their parents.

According to analysis of housing, employment, and wealth data, people in their twenties are facing a tougher start to adulthood than any generation in almost half a century.

I have graduated. I've got the degree. I've completed an internship. These were all things that seemed impossibly grown-up when I first arrived at university. Yet somehow, after ticking off all the boxes, I have even less of a clue what I'm supposed to do next.

So off I trot back home.

It turns out moving back home is no longer a fallback plan. For a growing number of graduates, it's simply the next step.

Graduation is supposed to feel like a finish line. You work hard for years, get awkward family photos and you're told everything will kind of work itself out.

Nobody really tells you what happens when it doesn't.

After four years of lectures, deadlines and surviving on meal deals and Red Bull, I thought I had finally done everything I was supposed to do. Then I entered the graduate job market.

Within minutes of a vacancy going live, hundreds of people apply. Many "entry-level" jobs demand years of experience, creating a paradox every graduate knows well: you need experience to get a job, but you need a job to get experience.

The job market is so demoralising. I've applied for hundreds of jobs, and I'm lucky if I even get an automated rejection email.

This is no longer an individual problem. It is becoming a generational one.

For decades, university was sold as the route to opportunity. Widening access to higher education was undoubtedly a good thing. It opened doors for people who might otherwise never have had the chance to attend university.

But somewhere along the way, having a degree stopped making you stand out and started becoming the minimum requirement.

The result is a generation that is more educated than ever, yet less secure.

So, after four years of independent living, learning how to budget, cook, clean and function as an adult, many graduates find themselves moving straight back into their childhood bedroom.

I am one of them.

The practical argument is obvious. Living at home saves money. It provides breathing room while you figure out your next move. It allows you to build some savings instead of handing half your salary straight to a landlord.

But being sensible does not feel great.

Moving home feels less like taking a step forward and more like pressing pause.

The problem isn't my parents, I love them both. Thankfully, they are not together, so when I get bored of one place I can go to another.

The problem is what moving home represents.

After years of organising your own life, making your own decisions and building routines, returning home feels regressive. No matter how old you are, there is something about being back in your childhood environment that makes you feel 15 again.

Your independence does not disappear, but it feels like it goes into storage for a bit. Then there is the social side of it.

After graduation arrives and everyone scatters.

One day you are living practically on top of each other. The next, you are spread across the country.

I think that is the strangest part of graduating.

You are not just leaving university. You are leaving behind the life you built there.

For years, your purpose is obvious. Submit the essay. Finish the semester. Get the degree.

There is always a next step. Then suddenly there isn't.

Instead, you are left with questions.

What happens if I do not immediately find a job?

Should I do a master's degree?

Should I move somewhere new?

Am I falling behind everyone else?

Or does everyone secretly feel exactly the same?

I suspect it is the latter. University was about more than education. It became your home, your routine, your friendships and, in many ways, your identity.

When that disappears, even if you are excited about the future, there is still a sense of loss.

That is why the BBC statistic matters.

When more than 40% of 25-year-olds are living with their parents, we should not automatically treat it as a lifestyle choice. For many, it is an economic necessity.

We are often told that graduates need to work harder, gain more experience or make better choices. But many are already doing exactly that. They are getting degrees, undertaking internships, working part-time jobs and sending out countless applications.

Yet financial independence remains increasingly difficult to achieve.

The transition into adulthood has not disappeared, just slightly delayed.

So I am moving back home, for an unspecified amount of time.

The practical side of me knows it makes perfect sense.

The emotional side feels like somebody has pressed pause on my life.

Making matters worse, that pause button happens to be located in Aberdeen.

I know people rush to defend the city whenever I say this, but I remain unconvinced. There are only so many times I can wander around Duthie Park or Union Square before I begin losing the plot.

Back home, boredom feels inevitable.

Still, perhaps that is the uncomfortable reality of graduation.

We are constantly told that university is an investment in our future. Go to lectures, get good grades, gain experience and opportunities will follow.

For many graduates, it is not working out like that.

More people than ever are leaving university with degrees, only to find themselves competing for a limited number of graduate jobs and a cost of living that shows no sign of easing.

So, like millions of Scottish graduates, I am moving back in with a parent.

Not because I want to, but because it makes financial sense.

And judging by the number of 20-somethings now living at home, I'm far from the only one.

Eva Milne is The Herald's Student Journalist of the Year and a graduate from Dundee University in English and Philosophy

The Herald

THE HERALD IS THE LONGEST-RUNNING NATIONAL NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD AND REMAINS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING FAIR AND IMPARTIAL COVERAGE OF SCOTLAND'S AFFAIRS AND DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY POLITICAL PARTY

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Party's over: Did Sturgeon and Murrell slay the SNP?

LETTERS

HAS the Sturgeon/Murrell "team" destroyed the SNP? ("Murrell's legal aid bill for SNP embezzlement to rise", The Herald, August 6).

Into this mix add John Swinney, who appears to have made this story front page news almost forever by not allowing an in-depth inquiry into the whole affair.

The SNP looks to have had little oversight of its funding, little control over Ms Sturgeon's outbursts, and no control over killing this story.

The SNP has been in decline for years as its vote share drops in recent elections. Given the state of the country – and the SNP's only policy being taxing those it has already taxed many times before – is the writing on the wall, finally, and has its luck run out, both at the same time?

It has the best part of five years still to run in government, but that is looking to be a curse rather than an achievement.

How many of its ministers are doing well? This appears to be a lame duck administration. It is not "stronger for Scotland".

Dr Gerald Edwards, Glasgow.

Challenges for new generations

"SO what", asks Joseph Graham, "will intelligent high school pupils do in the future? On what will they focus their aspirations?" (Letters, August 6.)

I hope they will devote all their hearts and minds, and apply their wits, scientific and humanitarian, to tackle a problem which my generation, to our everlasting shame, has not only failed to solve, but hasn't even attempted to address.

How can we all get along together, without destroying ourselves, and the planet?

How can we revive the international institutions, such as the United Nations, which in the space of a decade have been rendered impotent, and in the next decade might well be dismantled?

How can we rediscover our humanity by disenthralling ourselves from the addictions of social media? How can we recognise Artificial Intelligence for what it is, a blind alley?

How can we tear down "the gates, fences and locked doors (that) are springing up everywhere in the western world"?

How can we show the current masters of the universe that a bleak future is not inevitable, but rather a choice, and one that need not be made?

The great challenge for the next generation is to abolish war.

"You may say I'm a dreamer" and that it's impossible. We used to say the same thing about disease, and poverty.

I'm writing this 81 years, to the day, after the atomic bomb was cast upon Hiroshima, an anniversary that has received scant attention. Either we find a way to abolish war, or war will abolish us.

Dr Hamish Maclaren, Stirling.

Prison ships are the remedy

CAMPAIGNERS have urged Scotland's First Minister, John Swinney, to scrap his plans to allow sex offenders and domestic abusers out of jail early.

Previously he said that he would not rule out the early release of killers and rapists due to prison overcrowding.

This could be seen as showing more concern for criminals than their victims. Over 1,000 prisoners were released early in 2025.

Many reoffended. Why should prisoners be released after having served only 30% of their sentence? Scottish prisons may be overcrowded, but the solution is not early release.

The obvious solution to overcrowding is prison ships in stormy waters. Justice done.

Clark Cross, Linlithgow.

Business hostility must end

SCOTT Wright correctly states that BP's improving results (The Herald, August 1) are mainly connected to the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Commodity prices move with scarcity and demand; companies that still produce the oil and gas society needs will, in tight markets, post higher earnings.

That is commercial reality, not moral failure. Profits are a snapshot that could change overnight if hostilities end. What then? Energy firms must invest for years ahead, not on today's headlines alone.

Once again, the siren voices of Uplift and Global Witness are raised. Patrick Galey of Global Witness calls BP's profits "a scandalous reminder of who's been cashing in on human misery this year," blaming big oil for prioritising shareholder wealth over a liveable planet while wildfires, drought and energy costs hit families.

Yet these campaigners accept none of the responsibility for keeping the lights on, powering industry or ensuring fertilisers and other oil-and-gas derivatives continue to flow. Their demand for a dash for net zero ahead of any planned transition is itself driving fuel poverty. Their outrage is cost-free; the energy system is not.

Where was the UK Government when Deepwater Horizon cost BP shareholders, not taxpayers, around £70 billion in clean-up and compensation? Or when oil fell to $22 a barrel? Nowhere – yet it rushed to lend the banks in the 2007-08 financial crash.

Why then the focus on the UK's North Sea – a soft target? Britain has shut down its coal plants. Germany still generates about 21% of its electricity from coal; Poland around 53%, with residual new-build.

China and India continue vast coal expansion. Open hostility to business in the UK must end, or we remain the laughing stock of more dynamic countries. The carbon challenge is global; the lectures by fringe groups stay local and should be completely ignored until they have something sensible to say.

Ian Lakin, Milltimber, Aberdeen.

Let's celebrate Hospital at Home

IT was rather disappointing to read your recent article ("Worst June for Scotland's A&Es", The Herald, August 5). Many factors could have come into play which resulted in those figures.

However, regardless of how they have come about, for both those having long waits and NHS staff, it is ultimately distressing.

Opposition parties are quick to criticise, as your article highlighted. Yet those same opposition parties are slow to bring solutions to the table. While waits in A&E have been disappointing, one aspect of the NHS in Scotland is growing positively, Hospital at Home.

This service has seen an additional £100m investment from the SNP while in government, with the party planning for Hospital at Home to be the fastest growing, and largest element of the NHS in Scotland.

And this was achieved between October and December 2025. This service is keeping hundreds out of hospital and care homes, and allowing patients to recover quicker in their own homes. It deserves to be recognised for the huge contribution it is making within our NHS.

Catriona C Clark, Banknock, Falkirk.

SNP keeps failing

SCOTTISH exam results were published this week, and many children have done exceptionally well, making progress towards a future career ("Exam results day 2026 was uneventful. The goal should be to repeat that", The Herald, August 5).

This is more than can be said about the attainment gap, which is as wide as ever since Nicola Sturgeon promised, 11 years ago, to eliminate the gap completely. A&E waiting times were also released this week, for June. They show the worst ever waiting times on record, with only 67.9% of patients being seen within the SNP four hour target. The only positive comment regarding SNP performance in devolved matters is that it is very consistent with its failure to achieve.

Dennis Forbes Grattan, Aberdeen.

Join the debate: Letters should not exceed 500 words and must include a full address (not for publication) and contact number. Email letters@theherald.co.uk, or post to Letters, The Herald, 125 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow East Investment Park, Glasgow G32 8FG. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

COMMENT AT HERALDSCOTLAND.COM

Remember when... Cox and Paterson waited in vain for Godot

DREW ALLAN
Selections from The Herald Picture Store

BRIAN Cox and Bill Paterson starred as, respectively, Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre in 2015. Critics, marvelling at Mark Thomson's production, described it as an electrifying start to the Lyceum's 50th-anniversary season. It also starred John Bett and Benny Young as the itinerant visitors, Pozzo and Lucky. Reviewing it in the Herald, Neil Cooper gave the production four stars.

Browse the Herald Picture Store at picturestore.heraldandtimes.co.uk. Email photoenquiries@heraldandtimes.co.uk

Sturgeon and Murrell: what has their legacy been for the party they both once served? Picture: PA

Picture of the day

Colourful boats at Newhaven Harbour, Edinburgh on a bright, sunny day recently, pictured by Stuart Neville

We welcome submissions for Picture of the Day. Email picoftheday@theherald.co.uk

Class act Canavan is right when he says the royals must pay up

FORMER Labour MP and MSP Dennis Canavan says what today's politicians would be scared, or too timid, to say (Letters, Aug 5), suggesting royal funding could help poorer countries stage future Commonwealth Games.

He points out not one of the 21 African countries in the Commonwealth has ever been selected as host. So what's needed? A common fund to help them set up shop. And who could launch that, with a generous donation? The King, of course. Head of the Commonwealth and Patron of the Games, whose personal wealth is a modest £640 million, while the royal estate is worth £20 billion. Perhaps even Prince William (estimated worth: £74m), who also enjoyed the Glasgow games with his family, could chip in. Oh, how we miss Mr Canavan, with his astute perceptions from the Westminster benches. And how Scottish Labour could do with someone of his calibre and wit at Holyrood.

Andy Stenton, Glasgow.

BBC – where were you?

IT'S good to see the BBC is broadcasting the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham from August 10-16, on BBC1, BBC2 and BBC iPlayer. There for all to see and enjoy, which is to be commended, as it encourages young and old to take up sport for their own wellbeing. No doubt we'll have the usual entourage of commentators and athletes providing analysis.

Yes, if it's the football World Cup, Queen's Tennis, Wimbledon, or European Championships, the BBC is there, championing sport. Asking the BBC to venture across the border to Scotland to broadcast the Commonwealth Games was another question, with sportsmen and women from 56 countries around the world competing.

It's so sad that the BBC, which is paid for by us, failed on this occasion to broadcast the Games, making it impossible to watch on terrestrial television. An insult to the Corporation's viewing public, and a kick in the teeth to the many athletes who trained to represent their nation and make everyone proud.

If you are truly the British Broadcasting Corporation, don't just limit your broadcasting to south of the border. Come to Scotland, where you would have witnessed, and broadcast, an outstanding Games in the city of Glasgow.

Neil Stewart, Balfron.

Learn a trade, it builds confidence

AS an ex-joiner I'm in broad agreement with Brendan Keenan's letter highlighting the benefits of having a trade rather than going into further education (Letters, August 5).

One of the huge differences is that at 21 years of age, I had been in employment for at least four years, whilst earning a decent wage, and had no student loans. Most tradespeople exude a confidence that's a direct result of apprenticeship training. By the time we were 25, we were adults in every sense of the word.

However, nowadays there are modern employment laws and endless tribunals, while we were often told to hurry up or "get yer a*** moving" etc. It would be called bullying or verbal abuse now. If we failed to turn up we received no pay for that day.

We were exposed to the real world pretty much overnight, and, of course, we gave a chunk of our wages towards digs money.

I have to smile when people complain about the cost of hiring apprentices. If memory serves, our wage structure was based on a percentage of the joiners hourly rate, and it was 45% first year, 55% second year, 70% third year, and 85% for year four.

By today's standards an apprentice would earn circa £500 per week at 16 years old, and £850 per week at 20.

Most trade men today are self-employed. This has caused a massive drop in apprenticeship opportunities. Many employees only think about costs. But a good apprentice, who is prepared to learn and work hard, more than pays their way.

On a personal note, being a joiner has given me real confidence, and is the biggest single reason I was fortunate and able to build a career.

John Gilligan, Ayr.

Play for today

I WATCHED on BBC4 last Sunday evening John McGrath's unequalled 1973 play The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil.

I found myself thinking how prescient it was when first performed over 50 years ago by the 7:84 Theatre Company, a socialist touring theatre group, the name of which came from a 1966 statistic revealing that 7% of the UK population owned 84% of the country's wealth.

One aspect of the play which struck me forcibly was the image of the police attacking the Highland women objecting to being literally burnt out of their homes during the Highland Clearances, some 200 years ago.

I was reminded of the images of the police attacks on the miners, 40 years ago, during their strike. Extreme capitalists, or neoliberals, seem always to have been ready to use violence to achieve their ends. We lack a moderating influence.

Could it be Andy Burnham? He who said he wants to end 40 years of neoliberalism. Why should he? There are many forms of "violence", a gross inequality being one of them, failing to implement net zero and reducing overseas aid being others.

We must never forget that "Black, Black Oil" has been behind much of the UK's governments' policy in the Middle East.

The problems with Iran, for instance, can be traced back to Britain's overthrow of Iran's democratically elected government in 1953, because Prime Minister Mosaddegh nationalised Iran's oil industry, which had been exclusively controlled by the company which later became known as BP.

John Milne, Uddingston.

Should the king dig into his deep pockets to help with future Commonwealth Games? Picture: Tommy Forbes/Bango Studios/PA

Improve Highland line

I NOTE a working group is investigating the possibility of the Caledonian sleeper running to Europe. When Eurostar started in the 1990s, a special lounge was opened at Glasgow Central, complete with "Eurostar reception" signage, and the promise of "hotel style cabins" all the way to Paris from Glasgow.

Perhaps the working group should look at fixing the many inadequacies of rail transport in Scotland, like the ghastly West Highland line trains, before looking further afield.

Stuart Neville, Clydebank.

Green 'copters?

I SEE that down south Green Party leader Zack Polanski is advocating that oil companies be forced to fund fire fighting helicopters.

Would these be battery powered 'copters?

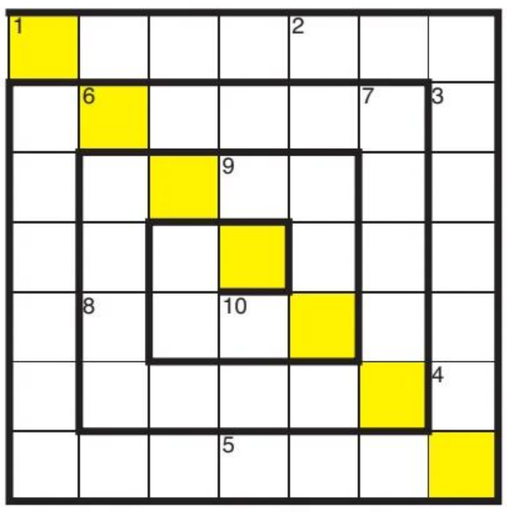
Just wondering.

Alastair Clark, Stranraer.

TEASERS

Word Spiral

Starting from 1, fill in the grid in a clockwise direction with your answer words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next word. If you have correctly filled in the grid there should be a seven-letter keyword reading down the shaded diagonal.

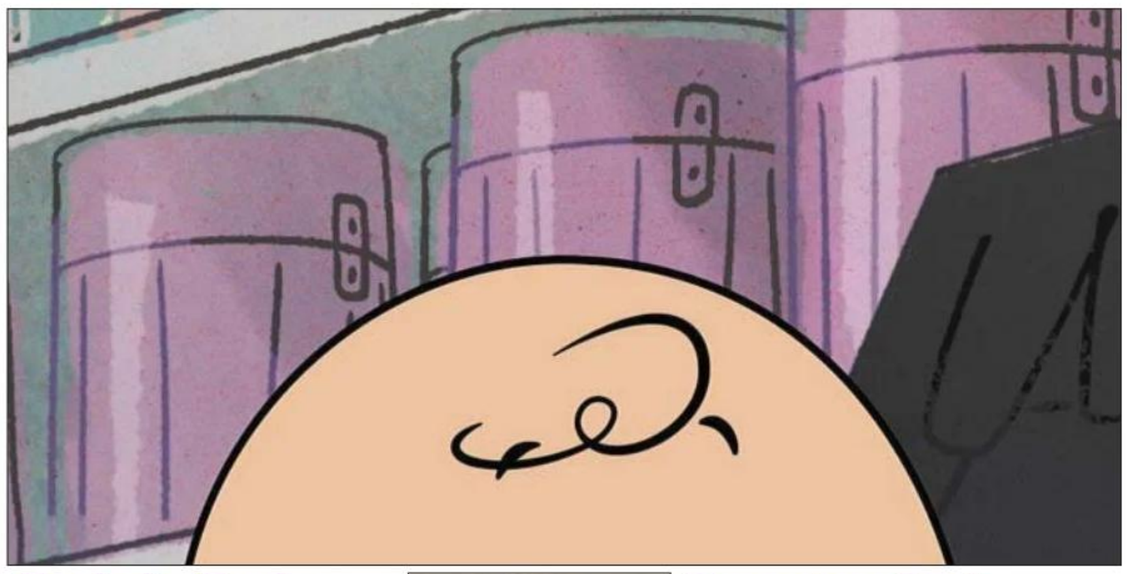


1 Accra's country (5)
2 Mr Stewart, former cricketer (4)
3 Brand-name lock (5)
4 Cry of appreciation (5)
5 Bizarre, unusual (3,3,4)
6 State flower of New Hampshire (5)
7 Clotted (10)
8 *A Midsummer Night's* ___, Shakespeare play (5)
9 Large juicy fruit (5)
10 Usual, average (4)

KEYWORD CLUE: SOPHISTICATION

Name the Celebrity

… and just for fun. Give your grey matter an extra workout. Can you think of seven things that this person is known for?



Quick Quiz

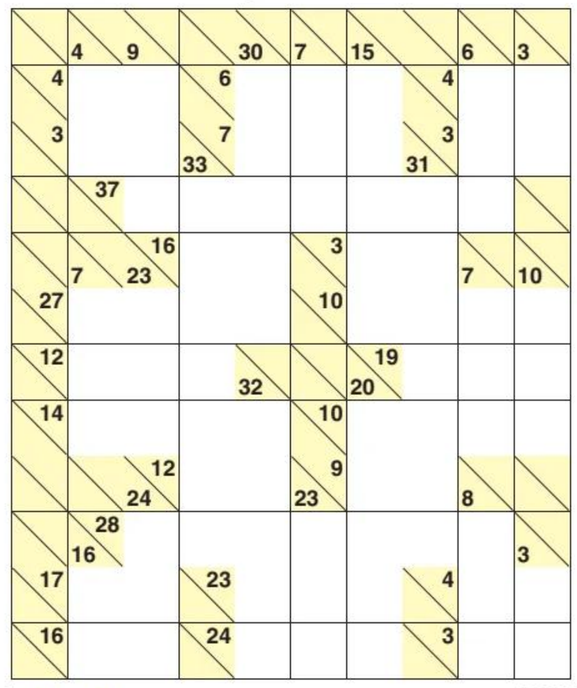
1. In a Walter Scott novel, where is the titular Fair Maid from?
2. The Little Mermaid statue is in which city?
3. Who is Mary's viewing companion on Gogglebox?
4. In which year did the Wall Street Crash occur?

Sports Quiz

1. A hail is used in which sport?
2. In 2018, who was the first tennis player in history to spend 1000 consecutive weeks in the ATP top 100?
3. Stormzy is a co-owner of which football club?
4. Which German striker scored 31 goals in 65 matches for Bayern Munich between 1995 and 1997?
5. A perfect game of tenpin bowling is achieved with how many balls?

Kakuro

Fill in the white squares with the numbers 1 to 9. Each horizontal block of squares must add up to the number in the shaded square to its left, and each vertical block must add up to the number in the shaded square above it. No number may be used more than once in any one block.



ANSWERS

Kakuro:

Word Spiral: 1 Ghana 2 Alec 3 Chubb 4 Bravo 5 Off the wall 6 Lilac 7 Coagulated 8 Dream 9 Melon 10 Norm GLAMOUR

Quick Quiz: 1. Perth 2. Copenhagen 3. Giles 4. 1929

Sports Quiz: 1. Shinty 2. Roger Federer 3. AFC Croydon Athletic 4. Jürgen Klinsmann 5. 12

Name the Celebrity: Charlie Brown

PUZZLES

answers tomorrow

Sudoku

Fill in the grids so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There's no maths involved – solve the puzzle using reasoning and logic.

EASY

			8			3	9	2
		5		6		8		
3				9				7
	3	7	5		8	2		
2								9
		4	9		3	7	5	
6				3				5
		9		1		6		
5	7	3			9			

HARD

6						7		4
					3	9	6	
		8	2	6				
		7		4				
		6	7				1	
	4				5		9	7
5	6					7		
	1			5	9	6		
8					6			5

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS:

4	2	8	1	7	6	5	3	9
5	3	9	2	8	4	1	6	7
1	6	7	5	9	3	4	2	8
2	8	3	7	4	1	9	5	6
9	1	4	6	5	2	7	8	3
7	5	6	8	3	9	2	4	1
8	4	5	9	6	7	3	1	2
6	7	2	3	1	5	8	9	4
3	9	1	4	2	8	6	7	5

4	3	1	9	2	6	5	7	8
2	7	6	8	5	4	9	1	3
8	9	5	7	1	3	6	4	2
3	1	9	5	4	7	2	8	6
7	8	2	6	9	1	4	3	5
6	5	4	3	8	2	1	9	7
1	2	8	4	3	5	7	6	9
9	4	7	2	6	8	3	5	1
5	6	3	1	7	9	8	2	4

Codeword

Codeword is a crossword with no clues. The number on each square corresponds to a letter. Fill in all the instances of the given letters, and then use your skill to crack the code and work out the rest. Cross each letter of the alphabet off as you go.

21	23	18	8	21	16	2	8	5	■	24	■	17
■	8	■	6	■	12	■	12	■	13	14	21	20
2	8	12	1	4	11	9	16	■	■	1 P	■	14
■	5	■	2	■	23	■	2	12	16	9 O	9	23
26	8	11	9	■	21	■	8	■	■	2 L	■	20
■	5	■	5	14	17	20	■	17	23	12	11	8
12	■	■	8	■	19	■	1	■	8	■	■	5
15	9	11	5	10	■	5	21	17	24	■	12	■
4	■	21	■	■	17	■	24	■	25	21	23	25
14	1	5	12	20	8	■	24	■	2	■	9	■
2	■	21	■	■	1	11	9	19	21	22	21	20
2	14	23	16	■	21	■	2	■	23	■	23	■
10	■	16	■	7	12	3	9	11	8	20	20	8

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 P	2 L	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 O	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION:

P	O	H	R	W	G	A	K	E	J	S	T	C
B	X	M	U	N	Z	Q	D	L	I	Y	V	F

Word Wheel

Give yourself ten minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each word must use the hub letter and at least three others, and letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found.

How you rate:
20, average
25, good
34, very good
41 or more, excellent.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION:

Deem, deer, demerit, demur, demure, deter, diet, dimer, dire, dirt, drum, duet, durum, edit, eider, erudite, etude, merited, meted, mired, mitred, muted, reed, retied, ride, rude, rued, tedium, teed, termed, tide, tied, tiered, timed, tired, tried, DEUTERIUM.

Totalize

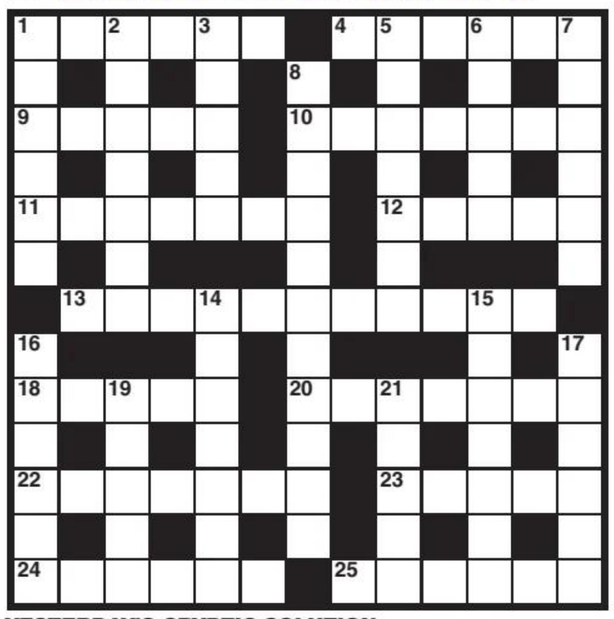
Just follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end.

EASY 31	- 23	× 3	+ 201	÷ 5	+ 169	Half of it	- 58	÷ 7	× 12	ANSWER
HARDER 519	- 169	80% of it	- 56	÷ 16	+ 2592	Half of it	- 388	Third of it	+ 3532	ANSWER

7 AUGUST 2026

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS: 47, 39

Double Crossword

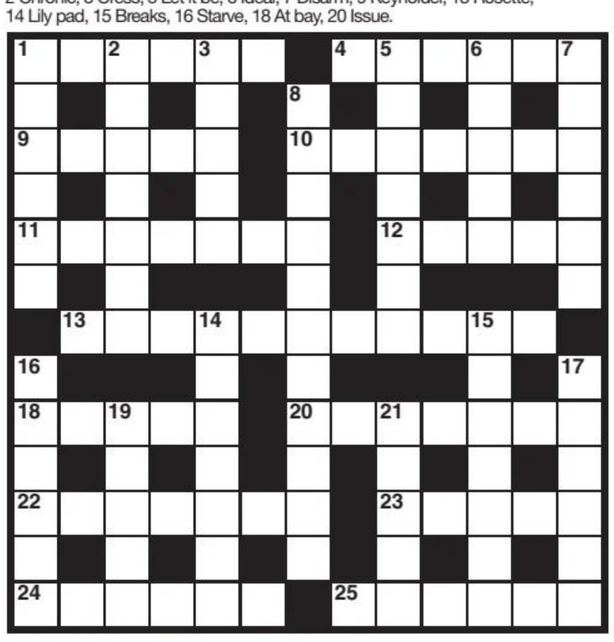


YESTERDAY'S CRYPTIC SOLUTION:
ACROSS:1 Rococo, 4 Allied, 8 Nurse, 9 Kittens, 10 Amnesty, 11 Tiler, 12 Corporeal, 17 Reams, 19 Driblet, 21 Arbiter, 22 Super, 23 Styled, 24 Needle. DOWN: 1 Rental, 2 Chronic, 3 Cress, 5 Let it be, 6 Ideal, 7 Disarm, 9 Keyholder, 13 Rosette, 14 Lily pad, 15 Breaks, 16 Starve, 18 At bay, 20 Issue.

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS
1 Pleads about fallen (6)
4 Doctor imitates curtains (6)
9 Tries out religious ceremonies (5)
10 Crushed lime, it's superiority (7)
11 Illness seen by tail wagging around people (7)
12 Promises hot porridge outside (5)
13 He has barred drunk draper (11)
18 A gambling device at university? I'm off! (5)
20 Understands nautical measures (7)
22 Bird recently died with ape (7)
23 Begin shifting green gunge (5)
24 Bloke is a spouter, we hear (6)
25 Join forces with side that has been promoted (4,2)

DOWN
1 Grubs found by a redhead in cooked veal (6)
2 Lightly hit girl on the kneecap (7)
3 Follow unseen, mostly in disguise (5)
5 Financially devastating IOUs? Run off! (7)
6 Stage direct (5)
7 Indian snack from a Greek island first (6)
8 Offer bid, get terrible dissent (3,2,6)
14 English expected to absorb Tom, as teacher should? (7)
15 For example, omits wrong self-esteem (7)
16 Rotter has nasty urge (3,3)
17 See pal rendered unconscious (6)
19 Accustom to danger in river (5)
21 Briefly experience discernment (5)



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS
1 Disconnect (an electrical appliance) (6)
4 Stringy material for making mats, lampshades and baskets (6)
9 Easy to understand (5)
10 Specialised college (7)
11 Pan scrubber (7)
12 ___ Drive, expensive Beverly Hills shopping area (5)
13 Person who uses crampons (4,7)
18 Brother of your father (5)
20 Oracle (7)
22 Sharp blade used by doctors (7)
23 Initial appearance (5)
24 Long angry denunciation (6)
25 Occult (6)

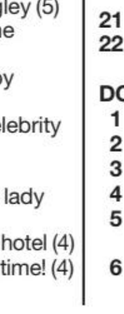
DOWN
1 If not, except that (6)
2 Very small wind instrument (7)
3 Cow's mammary gland (5)
5 Letter puzzle (7)
6 Piece of land for crops (5)
7 Besides (6)
8 Steamed suet pudding (3,4-4)
14 Essential safety precaution for rollerbladers (4-3)
15 Put on public display (7)
16 Dusk (6)
17 Crackling sound on the radio (6)
19 Item of furniture for sitting on (5)
21 Unusually (5)

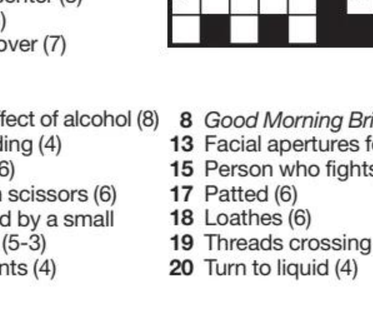
YESTERDAY'S QUICK SOLUTION:
ACROSS: 1 Tailor, 4 Charge, 8 Gaffe, 9 Lobster, 10 Tyranny, 11 Odour, 12 Obviously, 17 Isles, 19 Droplet, 21 Send-off, 22 Tulle, 23 Hushed, 24 Craggy. DOWN: 1 Tights, 2 Inferno, 3 Ocean, 5 Hobnobs, 6 Retro, 7 Errors, 9 Lay hold of, 13 Viscose, 14 Yule log, 15 Kitsch, 16 Steely, 18 Lungs, 20 Outer.

Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from town A to town B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION:





Cell Blocks

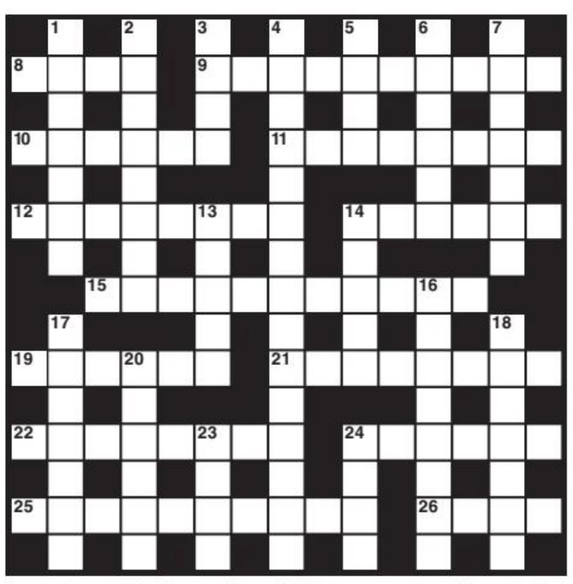
Divide the grid into blocks that are either square or rectangular. Each block must frame a single number, and each block must contain the same amount of cells as the number it frames.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION:

CLASSIC CROSSWORD

answers below

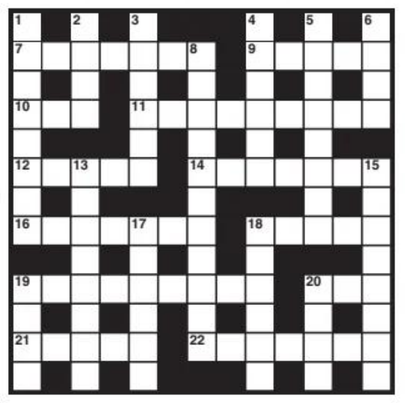
ACROSS
8 Active volcano in Vietnam (4)
9 Writer of late tour is a bit strange (10)
10 Old airline deception of guiding light (6)
11 Emperor to awaken a half-lizard inside (8)
12 Flyers ready to interrupt soldier's wall writing (8)
14 Gifted eccentric to behave restlessly (6)
15 The first gag messed up, this being the problem? (5,6)
19 Cat one treated without delay (2,4)
21 OK, so nothing left? (3,5)
22 Quietly arrives and gives a sermon (8)
24 Hot orc confused band of warriors (6)
25 Cool foreign refusal can halt movement (10)
26 Simple to remove oily head (4)



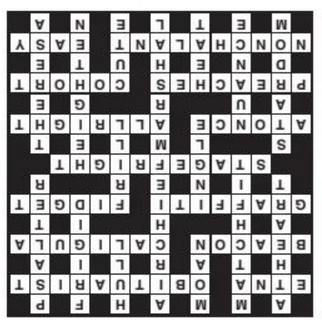
Saturday, 15th November, 2025 **No. 17,213**

DOWN
1 Fundamentally, a nasty threat (2,5)
2 Ready to compete at game - well? (5,3)
3 Complaint may only affect nerves initially (4)
4 Flying crash familiar? He may sort it out (3,5,7)
5 Beginnings of heather under Loch Lomond port (4)
6 Loud, inflexible and very cold (6)
7 Hear person preserving religious book (7)
13 Fireplace seen in Bingley (5)
14 Fancy gathering for the opening stream (5)
16 Raise number eaten by chicken (8)
17 Maybe mad sort of celebrity status (7)
18 Girl eats her stew (7)
20 Subtlety of a religious lady outside church (6)
23 Warm up to devour by hotel (4)
24 Pretty prompt – about time! (4)

ACROSS
7 Airman (7)
9 Manchester symphony orchestra (5)
10 Precious stone (3)
11 Helps a candidate (in an election) (9)
12 Volcanic shafts (5)
14 Protected against risk (7)
16 Abides (7)
18 ___ Oakley, Wild West sharpshooter (5)
19 Table for carpentry (9)
20 ___ Giedroyc, TV presenter (3)
21 Fake (5)
22 Leaps over (7)



DOWN
1 After-effect of alcohol (8)
2 Unyielding (4)
3 Glues (6)
4 Garden scissors (6)
5 Decided by a small margin (5-3)
6 Payments (4)
8 *Good Morning Britain* presenter (6,5)
13 Facial apertures for breathing (8)
15 Person who fights for his honour (8)
17 Patted (6)
18 Loathes (6)
19 Threads crossing the warp (4)
20 Turn to liquid (4)



The team are facing a race against time

Granite Harbour
BBC1, 8pm

IT was recently announced that 5 will be rebooting Monarch of the Glen, the hit comedy drama that ran for seven series in the early 2000s.

However, anyone flicking over to BBC1 on Friday nights could have been forgiven for thinking that the show was already back as the current series of Granite Harbour has been something of a reunion for Dawn Steele and Alastair Mackenzie, who played Lexie and Archie in the original run.

Dawn, who returned for this third series of Granite Harbour as DCI Cora MacMillan, is certainly glad to be back on screen with her former co-star: "We are still friends and in touch a lot but haven't worked together in 25 years. It was so lovely and very easy... like no time had passed!

Alastair, who has been guest starring in this run as Richard Loughty, feels the same, saying: "It was an utter joy to be on set with her again, although we did not have many scenes together. It was very nostalgic too.

"Monarch was a very happy time and so well-loved by so many people and Dawn was so fabulous as Lexie. She's a national treasure really. It was lovely but we always giggle a lot, so we had tried hard to be very professional! I think it worked."

Neither of their characters will have much to giggle about though as the series concludes tonight after what has been a gripping run.

Dawn sums up the series so far, saying: "Audiences will see a different side of Aberdeen as the story centres on the Traveller community, which is rocked by a shocking murder. It's a real whodunnit, and I hope people have fun trying to work out who's responsible.

"We also delve much more into the detectives' personal lives this series. It's probably the most emotional series we've made, and you really feel for a lot of the characters."

She adds: "Cora faces a personal health scare, and I loved having the chance to show a more vulnerable side to her. At the same time, she's under immense pressure to solve the case while also dealing with the SPIS investigation into Malik's dismissal from last series."

The pressure is certainly mounting tonight as the discovery of another body throws the investigation into chaos. MacMillan, Bart and Lindo suspect this murder is linked to the deaths of teenagers Lisa and Matty, and also uncover links between the fire that nearly claimed Rose Gough's life and a long-hidden agreement that could change the rights of the Travelling community to be on the Loughty estate.

When the case takes another dramatic turn, the team once again focus on Matty's missing phone, which they believes hold the key to identifying the killer.

With fingers pointing in numerous directions, Lindo and Bart must untangle a web of lies to separate fact from fiction and discover what really happened during Matty and Lisa's final hours.

Lindo and Bart face a race against time to find the real killer

BBC 1

6.00 Breakfast (S) **9.30 Animal Park** The emu keepers hope a chick might be about to hatch. (R) (S) (AD) **10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back** Tracker Richard follows expensive farmyard vehicles to a scrapyard. (R) (S) **10.45 Expert Witness** (R) (S) **11.15 Homes Under The Hammer** Featuring properties in Carlisle, Stoke and Essex. (R) (S) **12.15 Bargain Hunt: 20 Years Of The One Show** Two teams of One Show presenters battle it out. (S) (AD)

1pm
1.00 BBC News At One; Weather (S)
1.35 Reporting Scotland; Weather (S)
1.45 BBC News At One; Weather (S)
2.00 The Hairdresser Mysteries (S) (AD)
2.45 Escape To The Country (R) (S)
3.45 The Bidding Room (S)
4.30 The Answer Run (S)
5.15 Pointless Alexander Armstrong hosts. (R) (S)

6pm

The Hairdresser Mysteries, 2pm: When a Japanese social media influencer takes over the Manor House, Lily finds herself with both a hairstyle emergency and a murder to solve.

6.00 BBC News At Six; Weather (S)
6.30 Reporting Scotland; Weather (S)
7.00 The One Show Alex Jones and Roman Kemp kick off the show's 20th birthday celebrations. (S)
7.30 Our Lives Cameras follow South Wales punk band the NaNaz. (S) (AD)
8.00 Granite Harbour Lindo and Bart face a race against time. Last in the series. (R) (S) (AD)
9.00 Would I Lie To You? Cush Jumbo, Judi Love, Grayson Perry and Tim Vine join the regulars. (R) (S)
9.30 Ann Droid Sue invites Michael and Renee to a nice family dinner. (S) (AD)

10pm
10.00 BBC News At Ten A round-up of today's headlines. (S)
10.30 Reporting Scotland; Weather (S)
10.45 FILM: 28 Days Later (2002) Horror, starring Cillian Murphy. (S) (AD)

Late night
12.30 Weather For The Week Ahead (S)
12.35 BBC News (S)

BBC 2

6.30 Money For Nothing Sarah Moore attempts to trick the eye by updating a display cabinet. (R) (S) **7.15 The Bidding Room** A small package holding 400 years of fascinating history is revealed. (R) (S) **8.00 Sign Zone: Marcus Wareing Simply Provence** Marcus challenges a French chocolatier to use English tea as an ingredient. Last in the series. (R) (S) (SL) **9.00 BBC News** A round-up of the latest headlines. (S)

1pm
1.00 Richard Osman's House Of Games (R) (S)
1.30 The Finish Line (R) (S)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (R) (S)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation The duo reach northern Spain. (R) (S) (AD)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown (R) (S)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow (R) (S)
5.15 Flog It! From Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. (R) (S)

6pm

Gardeners' World, 8pm: Frances Tophill returns to Damson Farm in Bath and spends the day with owner Alison and guest Mary Berry, while Arit Anderson visits an urban edible garden in London.

6.00 Richard Osman's House Of Games Gethin Jones, Tiff Stevenson, Kate Thornton and Gary Wilmot take part. (R) (S)
6.30 Just One Thing The benefits of eating beetroot. Last in the series. (R) (S) (AD)
7.00 Iolo's Anglesey Iolo Williams explores the flora and fauna of Anglesey. (R) (S)
7.30 Beechgrove Garden (S)
8.00 Gardeners' World Frances Tophill returns to Damson Farm in Bath. (S)
9.00 Bergerac Chloe finds evidence proving there is some truth in John Blakely's accusations. (S) (AD)
9.45 QI XL With Ria Lina, Eshaan Akbar and Jimmy Carr. (R) (S)

10pm
10.30 Newsnight With Paddy O'Connell. (S); Weather The latest forecast. (S)
11.05 FILM: Hoard (2023) Premiere. Drama, starring Saura Lightfoot-Leon. (S)

STV

6.00 Good Morning Britain Morning magazine featuring a lively mix of news and current affairs, plus health, entertainment and lifestyle features. (S) **10.00 This Morning** Daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health and beauty advice and more. (S)

1pm
1.30 ITV Lunchtime News; Weather (S)
1.55 STV News; Weather (S)
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and his dealer den visit Newport. (R) (S) (AD)
3.00 Deal Or No Deal (R) (S) (AD)
3.59 STV Weather Central (S)
4.00 Tipping Point Quiz, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R) (S)
5.00 The Chase Comghal, Samantha, Adam and Yung Yung take part. (R) (S)

6pm

Dickinson's Real Deal, 2pm: David Dickinson and his dealer den visit Newport. Karen Dalmeny pays big bucks for a stunning brooch, and Laurie Scully conducts a male voice choir.

6.00 STV News At Six; Weather (S)
6.30 ITV Evening News; Weather (S)
7.00 The STV Radio Football Takeover Ewen Cameron, Ronnie Charters and Callum Bell tackle the biggest talking points in Scottish football with plenty of laughs, heated arguments and passionate opinions. (S) (AD)
7.30 EFL Cup Live Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off 8.00pm). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the first-round tie at Riverside Stadium. With analysis from Tommy Smith and Steven Fletcher, and commentary by Seb Hutchinson and Lucy Ward. (S)

10pm
10.25 ITV News At Ten; Weather A fresh perspective on the major stories of the day. (S)
10.55 STV News; Weather (S)
11.15 FILM: Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (2016) Action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise. (S)

CHANNEL 4

6.30 The King Of Queens American comedy, starring Kevin James. (R) (S) (AD) **7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond** Comedy, starring Ray Romano. (R) (S) (AD) **9.10 Frasier** (R) (S) (AD) **11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** A restaurant that has forgotten the most crucial aspect of an eatery's reputation. (R) (S) **12.05 Channel 4 News Summary** (S) **12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It** Items uncovered in Norfolk include a tractor. (R) (S) (AD)

1pm
1.10 The Great House Giveaway Accountant Kate and builder Jonny buy a house together at auction in Leeds. (R) (S)
2.10 Countdown With Ade Adepitan in Dictionary Corner. (S)
3.00 A Place In The Sun House-hunters Jesica and Karl search for a holiday home in Cadiz, Spain. (R) (S)
4.00 Saving Country Houses With Penelope Keith (R) (S) (AD)
5.00 Chateau DIY (R) (S) (AD)

6pm

8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown, 9pm: Jimmy Carr hosts the words and numbers quiz, as captains Rob Beckett and Jon Richardson are joined by Katherine Ryan and Fatiha El-Ghorri.

6.00 American Pickers In a jam-packed home, Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz find a rare Superman comic as well as the very first Spider-Man comic worth $50,000. (R) (S) (AD)
7.00 Channel 4 News (S)
8.00 Surgery Secrets Of The Super Rich Hannah has a non-surgical liquid nose job, Hollie tackles years of sun damage with laser technology, and Nabeel's investing over £1,000 a month in a programme of tweakments. (S) (AD)
9.00 8 Out Of 10 Cats Does Countdown With Katherine Ryan, Fatiha El-Ghorri, Jake Lambert and the Brett Domino Trio. (S)

10pm
10.00 Big Fat Quiz: Best Bits A compilation of the ultimate triumphs from the quiz. (S)
11.05 Sarah Millican: Home Bird Live Stand-up show recorded at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre & Opera House. (R) (S)

5

6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 Jeremy Vine The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day, with phone-ins and viewers' correspondence. (S) **11.30 Storm & Alexis** Discussion and debate, presented by Storm Huntley and Alexis Conran. (S) **12.45 5 News At Lunchtime** National and international news. (S) **12.50 Matt Allwright** Debate on the day's biggest stories, and consumer advice to help viewers save money. (S)

1pm
2.20 FILM: The Book Club Murders (2024) Members of a book club start to receive threatening letters that reveal their darkest secrets. Mystery, starring Brittany Underwood and Eva Igo. (S)
4.00 Castle Part two of two. The NYPD and Castle search for Beckett. (R) (S)
4.55 Love Nature Discovering how the humble fox should be celebrated not vilified. (R) (S)
5.00 5 News With Dan Walker (S)

6pm

Alexander Armstrong in South Korea, 9pm: Alexander journeys across South Korea, one of the most influential and successful countries on earth, known for its manufacturing strength.

6.00 Menorca: A Year In The Sun Part two of two. A look at Menorca's seafood, art and architectural restorations. (R) (S)
6.55 5 News Update (S)
7.00 Tom Read Wilson's Grand Tour The presenter reimagines the rite of passage once undertaken by aristocrats. (R) (S)
7.55 5 News Update (S)
8.00 Corsica: Jewel Of The Mediterranean Cameras focus on the French island, which boasts 600 miles of stunning coastline, lush green forests and majestic mountains. (S)
9.00 Alexander Armstrong In South Korea Alexander embarks on an epic journey across the country. (R) (S)

10pm
10.30 Piers Morgan: Uncensored Opinion-led news and debate show hosted by Piers Morgan. (S)

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

BORDER SCOTLAND As STV except: 1.55 ITV News Border; Weather (S) 3.59 ITV Border Weather (S) 6.00 ITV News Lookaround; Weather (S) 7.00 Border Life. Fiona Armstrong visits a grand country house in the Borders. (S) 10.55 ITV News Border; Weather (S) 1.10 Shop On TV 4.45 Unwind With ITV. Daily escape designed to calm the mind and encourage relaxation and reflection. (S)

ULSTER As STV except: 1.55 UTV Live; Weather (S) 3.59 UTV Weather (S) 6.00 UTV Live; Weather (S) 7.00 UTV Life. Join Pamela Ballantine for the best of local chat. (S) 10.55 UTV Live; Weather (S)

FOUR OF THE BEST

Our Lives
BBC1, 7.30pm

A group of women of a certain age come together to form a punk band and prove that growing older doesn't have to mean quietening down. That's the plot of the hit BBC drama Riot Women, but it's also the real-life experience of six women from Newport. This documentary reveals how they met at community workshops in south Wales set up to get women over 50 into music, That led to them founding their group the NaNaz, who channel everyday realities into honest punk anthems about the menopause, care homes and even recycling. They've built a loyal local following, but now they are taking their music to New York.

Ann Droid
BBC1, 9.30pm

It's got a cast stacked with comedy ringers (led by Diane Morgan, Sue Johnston and Paul Ready), so we shouldn't be surprised that this sitcom has been picking up rave reviews from critics and viewers alike. However, while we expected it to be funny, it's also got a lot of heart, especially in Johnston's performance as grieving widow Sue. This week, she's attempting to build bridges by asking Michael and Renee to come over for a nice family dinner, even turning down an invite to Phyllis's surprise birthday party on the date in question. Unfortunately, when Michael and Renee's real motive for turning up is revealed, the game of happy families threatens to come to an end. Can robot care Linda avert disaster by dropping a bombshell of her own?

Bergerac
BBC2, 9pm

The investigation is threatening to turn into a battle of wills between Jim (Damien Molony) and Arthur Wakefield (Philip Glenister), and it's only growing more intense this week. However, after learning that Cate may have betrayed Arthur, Jim feels like he is closing in on his chief suspect. The detective may have reckoned without Chloe (Ayesha Antoine) though, as her expose gains momentum after she discovers there may be some truth in John Blakely's (Stephen Wight) accusations after all.

Corsica: Jewel of the Mediterranean
5, 8pm

Cameras focus on the French island, which boasts 600 miles of stunning coastline, lush green forests and majestic mountains. Once a part of Italy, both French and Italian heritage can be seen today in the architecture, culture and food. Highlights include a trip to the port town of Bastia on the north-east coast of the island, a food-lover's paradise.

FILM CHOICE

Hoard
BBC2, 11.05pm

CHILDHOOD trauma reverberates into anguished adolescence in an emotionally charged drama written and directed by Luna Carmoon. Ten-year-old Maria (Lily-Beau Leach) lives with her hoarder single mother, Cynthia (Hayley Squires), who scavenges bins for discarded treasures and out-of-date food. Several years later, Maria (now played by Saura Lightfoot Leon) leaves school. She is happily settled with a foster mother, Michelle (Samantha Spiro), who lavishes her with kindness and affection. Out of the blue, one of Michelle's previous wards, late 20-something Michael (Joseph Quinn), returns for a visit. He becomes fixated on Maria and unlocks destructive sexual desires that threaten to propel the teenager to the brink of a mental health crisis.

PEAK FREEVIEW

BBC SCOTLAND
FV 9, SKY 115, VIRGIN 108

12.00 This Is BBC Scotland 7.00 Reporting Scotland: News At Seven 7.25 Sportscene: Championship Live Partick Thistle v Livingston (Kick-off 7.30pm). **9.30 Best Of Only An Excuse?** A selection of sketches picked from the archives of the hit comedy. **10.00 Still Game. 10.30 Two Doors Down 11.00 Rip It Up 12.00 Close**

ALBA
FV 7, SKY 117, VIRGIN 161

5.00 Na Clangairean 5.15 Losgannan/ Froglets 5.20 Creag Nam Buthaidean (Puffin Rock) 5.30 'S E Iasg A Th'Annam (I'm A Fish) 5.35 Peataichean/Pets 5.40 Abadas 5.55 Stòiridh 6.00 An Teaghlach Rìoghail An Ath-dhoras (The Royals Next Door) 6.20 Clann Na Cruinne 6.40 Belle Agus Sebastian 6.50 Seonaidh (Shaun The Sheep) 7.00 An Là (News) 7.25 Brunch Le Abigail 7.30 Machair 8.00 Slighe Naoimh Cuithbeirt (St Cuthberts Way) 8.30 Mas Fhior 9.00 Aig Aí Mhullach (Valtos) 10.00 Coin Trusaidh/Muster Dogs 10.55 Srùb: Scotland On Coffee 12.00 Alba Today

BBC4
FV 24, SKY 116, VIRGIN 107

7.00 Also Sprach Zarathustra At The Proms Featuring a trio of pieces inspired by the wonders of the sky. **8.05 Ravel's Bolero At The Proms 8.20 TOTP: 2000 8.45 TOTP: 1984 9.15 TOTP: 1988 9.45 Tony Bennett At The London Palladium: BBC Sessions 10.45 Tony Bennett Sings – Songs From The Movies 11.15 Tony Bennett Sings – His Personal Hit Songbook 11.50 Tony Bennett Sings – Songs Of Broadway 12.20 Tony Bennett Sings – Saloon Songs 12.55 Tony Bennett Sings – Song Stories**

ITV2
FV 6, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

5.00 The Real Housewives Of Orange County 6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase 7.00 The Floor USA 8.00 The 1% Club 9.00 Film: John Wick (2014) **11.05 Family Guy 12.05 American Dad!**

ITV3
FV 10, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

4.40 Classic Coronation Street 5.15 Classic Coronation Street 5.50 Heartbeat 8.00 Doc Martin 10.00 Grantchester 11.50 Trial & Retribution 12.55 Agatha Christie's Poirot

ITV4
FV 26, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

4.50 The Professionals 5.50 Minder 6.55 Sharpe A Spanish rebel captures British deserters. **9.00 Film: RoboCop** (1987) **11.10 All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite**

FILM4
FV 14, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

4.50 Film: The True Story Of Jesse James (1957) **6.40 Film: Ad Astra** (2019) Sci-fi drama, starring Brad Pitt. **9.00 Film: The Martian** (2015) Sci-fi drama, starring Matt Damon. **11.50 Film: Last Night In Soho** (2021)

U&DAVE
FV 19, SKY 111, VIRGIN 127

5.00 Rick Stein's Cornwall 6.00 Hairy Bikers' Best Of British 7.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing 7.40 Would I Lie To You? 8.20 QI XL 9.20 Would I Lie To You? 10.00 Magnum P.I 12.00 Mock The Week

5USA
FV 21, SKY 169, VIRGIN 120

5.00 Law & Order 6.00 NCIS 9.00 Beauty And The Beast 11.00 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit

U&DRAMA
FV 20, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

4.05 Lovejoy 5.20 As Time Goes By 6.00 Last Of The Summer Wine 8.00 Father Brown 10.00 New Tricks Guest starring Ken Farrington. **11.20 Luther 12.40 Lovejoy**

U&YESTERDAY
FV 27, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

5.00 Great War Stories 6.00 Antiques Roadshow 7.00 The Green Planet 8.00 Canal Boat Diaries 10.00 Bangers & Cash 12.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

RADIO LISTINGS

RADIO SCOTLAND
MW 810; FM 92.4-94.7 6.00 Radio Scotland Breakfast. **9.00** Mornings. **12.00** Lunchtime Live. **1.30** Breaking the News. **2.00** Radio Scotland Afternoons. **4.00** Drivetime. **6.00** Grant Stott's Vinyl Collective. Classic LPs and new releases. **8.00** BBC Introducing in Scotland. Undiscovered music from Scotland, with Liv Cowle. **10.00** Up Late. **12.00** As BBC Radio 5 Live.

RADIO 2
FM 88.0/90.2 6.30 The Sara Cox Breakfast Show. **9.30** Vernon Kay. **12.00** Jeremy Vine. **2.00** DJ Spoony. **4.00** Joel Dommett. **7.00** Michelle Visage. A selection of hits from across the pop music genre. **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits. **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco. Uplifting disco tunes to dance and sing-along to. **11.00** The Rock Show with Rick Astley. **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop. **1.00** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul. **2.00** Pick of the Pops. **3.00** Pick of the Pops. **4.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin.

RADIO 3
FM 90.2/92.4 6.30 Breakfast. **9.30** Essential Classics. **1.00** Classical Live. **4.00** Composer of the Week: Mozart. **5.00** In Tune. **7.00** BBC Proms 2026. BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, conductor Nil Venditti, and star soloists perform Rossini's Stabat Mater. Respighi's Church Windows light the first half. **10.00** Late Junction. **11.30** 'Round Midnight. **12.30** Through the Night.

RADIO 4
FM 92.4-95.8 5.00 News Summary. **5.04** The Briefing Room. **5.32** Weather. **5.34** Shipping Forecast. **5.43** Prayer for the Day. **5.45** Farming Today. **6.00** Today. **9.00** Desert Island Discs. **10.00** Woman's Hour. **11.00** The Food Programme. **11.45** Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. **12.00** News. **12.04** AntiSocial. **12.57** Weather. **1.00** The World at One. **1.45** The Bare Necessities. **2.00** The Archers. **2.15** Drama: Central Intelligence. **2.45** Living on the Edge. **3.00** Gardeners' Question Time. **3.45** Short Works. **4.00** Last Word. **4.30** Sideways. **5.00** PM. **5.57** Weather. **6.00** Six O'Clock News. **6.30** Current-ish. **7.00** The Archers. **7.15** Screenshot. **8.00** Any Questions? Topical discussion, chaired by Alex Forsyth. **8.55** This Week in History. **9.00** Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics. **9.30** Breakin' the Cycle. **9.59** Weather. **10.00** The World Tonight. **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield. **11.00** Americast. **11.30** The Ocean within Us. **12.00** News. **12.30** Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away. **12.48** Shipping Forecast. **1.00** As BBC World Service.

RADIO 5
MW 693/909 5.00 Wake Up to Money. **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast. **9.00** Nicky Campbell. **11.00** Chiles on Friday. **1.00** Elis James and John Robins. **2.00** Matt Chorley. **4.00** 5 Live Drive. **7.00** 5 Live Sport. A round-up of the day's sports news. **8.00** Football. Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off 8.00pm). **10.00** Johnny I'Anson. **1.00** Edward Adoo.

WORLD SERVICE
Overnight on Radio 4 1.00 The Newsroom. **1.30** The Global Story. **2.00** The Newsroom. **2.30** Stumped. **3.00** News. **3.06** Outlook. **3.50** Witness History. **4.00** News.

CLASSIC FM
FM 99.9/101.9 6.30 Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker. **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker. **10.00** Aled Jones. **1.00** Anne-Marie Minhall. **4.00** Margherita Taylor. **6.00** Classic FM at the Movies with Jonathan Ross. Music to celebrate and commiserate exam results. **8.00** Classical Spotlight with Alexander Armstrong. The host spotlights music by virtuosic violinist Nicola Benedetti. **10.00** Calm Classics. **2.00** Katie Breathwick.

ABSOLUTE
Digital Only 6.00 Dave Berry. **10.00** Leona Graham. **1.00** Sarah Champion. **4.00** Bush and Richie. **7.00** Absolute 80s with Claire Sturgess. Music and memories from the decade of outlandish outfits and hairstyles. **10.00** Sophie K. **4.00** Ben Coley.

HEART
FM 100.3-101.1 6.30 Heart Breakfast. **10.00** Amy Irons. **1.00** Cat Cubie. **4.00** David Farrell. **7.00** Heart's Club Classics with Toby Anstis. Join Toby for four hours of the biggest Club Classics NON-STOP. Get in touch on 82122, or send a message to Toby on your Alexa, just say..."Alexa, send a comment to Heart". **11.00** Rezzy Ghadjar. **1.00** Seb Bailey.

TALKSPORT
MW 1053/1089 5.00 Early Sports Breakfast. **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast with Alan Brazil. **10.00** Max Scott & Darragh McAnthony. **1.00** Hawksbee and Jacobs. **4.00** talkSPORT Drive. **7.00** Kick Off. Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off 8.00pm). **10.00** The Sports Bar Weekender. **1.00** Extra Time with Ben Fletcher.

RADIO NAN GAIDHEAL
FM 103.6-104.9 7.30 Aithris na Maidne. **9.00** Naoi gu Deich. **10.00** A' Mire ri Mòir. **12.00** Feasgar an-diugh. **1.30** Caithream Ciùil. **3.30** Mo Chuairt Ciùil. **5.00** Aithris an Fheasgair. **5.30** Rogha is Tagha. **6.00** Na Dùrachdan. Dùrachdan, ceòl, òrain is fealla-dhà. **9.00** Mac'ille Mhìcheil. Cuiridh Iain Mac'illeMhìcheil agus aoighean an deireadh seachdain air a chasan. **11.00** Naoi gu Deich. **12.00** Mar Radio Alba.

SMOOTH RADIO
FM 105.2 6.00 John McCauley. **9.00** Golden Hour. **10.00** Kate Garraway. **1.00** Paul Phear. **4.00** Angie Greaves. **7.00** Smooth Sanctuary at 7 with Darren Parks. **10.00** The Smooth Late Show with Martin Collins. **1.00** Philip Chryssikos.

Independent review of fish farms begins on impact to environment

From our archives

5 years ago

AN independent review into the regulation of fish farms is under way, the Scottish Government has said. Professor Russel Griggs has been appointed to lead the first phase of the review, which aims to highlight what improvements can be made to the environmental, economic and community aspects of aquaculture legislation. Critics have long raised concerns about the environmental impact of fish farms and their impact on wild salmon stocks. Last month, the RSPCA launched an investigation after video footage said to have been shot at sites on the west coast showed fish covered in lice. A dead salmon was also filmed in a state of decomposition. Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said there is a need for better efficiency, effectiveness and transparency.

10 years ago

A BLIND thrill-seeker is gearing up for his next challenge – to paddleboard across seven lochs in seven days. Dean Dunbar, 47, has taken part in hundreds of challenges around the world, despite being registered blind. And now Mr Dunbar, from Blairgowrie, Perth and Kinross, is preparing to paddleboard across the lochs – dubbed the Magnificent Seven – starting today. He will cover 136 miles of water across lochs Lomond, Awe, Shin, Ness, Shiel, Erricht and Tay, alongside partners Ian Cormack and Allistair Swinsco.

25 years ago

A MOBILE phone mast at the centre of a row involving local people and the installers has disappeared from a street in Renfrew. Residents of Nethergreen estate had complained that the mast for mobile phone company One2One was too close to houses and a play park and urged the local council to ban it. It was previously under the height that would have required planning permission, and Renfrewshire Council was powerless to stop it. However, yesterday the law was changed to cover all mobile phone masts. The 12.5-metre mast was erected on a pavement in Nethergreen Wynd last week, but within 24 hours the base station had been vandalised and the company took it away.

50 years ago

AT long last we have proof that shorthand and typing skills can really be the passport to jet-setting secretarial jobs with fat salaries and company cars. No longer is it even necessary for secretaries to pack their notebooks and typewriter ribbons and set off on the high road to London. Equal opportunities and the Scottish traditions of exacting a great deal of hard work and then rewarding capability and dedication have established top-level opportunities here for the thoroughly efficient executive secretary. The Scotch whisky firm of Arthur Bell and Sons, Perth, are now advertising for an executive secretary at an annual salary of £5,000, with company car and house loan facilities.

100 years ago

SENTENCE of three months' imprisonment was passed on William Wilson, alias Samuel William Miller, farm labourer, of no fixed residence, by Sheriff-Substitute Broun at Ayr Sheriff Court for defrauding two landladies in Rutherglen and one in Ayr, the total sum involved being £1 17s. In each case accused pretended that he was employed by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company. The Ayr landlady became suspicious, and on inquiries it was discovered that accused was not employed by the railway.

Birthdays

Nick Ross, broadcaster, 79; Greg Chappell, former cricketer, 78; Alexei Sayle, comedian, 74; Bruce Dickinson, heavy metal musician, 68; David Duchovny, actor, pictured, 66; Brian Conley, comedian/actor, 65; Dominic Cork, former cricketer, 55.

On this day

1711: Ascot became "Royal" with the attendance of Queen Anne at the horse races.
1840: Parliament passed an Act prohibiting the employment of climbing boys as chimney sweeps.
1858: Ottawa was chosen by Queen Victoria to be the capital of Canada.
1876: Mata Hari (Margaretha Zelle), exotic spy who passed secrets to Germany during the First World War, was born. The French arrested her in 1917 and she was killed by firing squad.
1925: British Summer Time became permanent with the passing of the Daylight Saving Act.
1926: The first British Motor Racing Grand Prix was held at the Brooklands track, over a distance of 110 laps and 287 miles.
1957: Oliver Hardy, the comedian who, with his partner Stan Laurel, formed one of the most successful double acts of all time, died at the age of 65.
1958: The Litter Act came into force in Britain.
1981: The Washington Star published its final edition after 128 years of publication.
2012: Sir Chris Hoy made Olympic history when he won his sixth cycling gold medal in the frenzied atmosphere of the velodrome.
ON THIS DAY LAST YEAR: Homelessness minister Rushanara Ali resigned from the Government following reports she hiked rent on a property she owns by hundreds of pounds just weeks after the previous tenants' contract ended.

Announcements

To advertise: **0141 302 6000** | email: **announcements@heraldandtimes.co.uk** | Online: **www.heraldscotland.com/advertising**

Death notices now include a **FREE PHOTO**

DEATHS Notices

CRAWFORD
Agnes Craig nee Smillie

Peacefully on Saturday 1st August 2026 in the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, aged 89. Beloved wife of Jim, loving mother to Una, May and Robert, much loved mother-in-law, gran and great-gran and a dear sister to Margaret.

Following a private committal there will be a service of Thanksgiving to which all family and friends are respectfully invited at Houston and Killellan Kirk on Monday 17th August 2026 at 11.30am. Family flowers only please.

GOLDIE - Jack

Peacefully at Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock, on Sunday 26th July 2026, Jack, aged 85 years. Beloved husband of Agnes, much loved dad of Elizabeth, John and David, loving father-in-law and papa. Will be sadly missed by all the family. Funeral service at Holmsford Bridge Crematorium, Dreghorn on Friday 21st August 2026 at 10.30am. Family flowers only, please. All family and friends are respectfully invited.

GREIG
Marion née Mudie

Peacefully at Spiers Care Home Beith on Thursday 27th July 2026. Marion Greig aged 94 years, beloved wife of the late Jimmy, mother to Sheila, Marjory, Joyce and the late Colin. Loving Granny and Great Granny. Funeral Service at Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium KA24 5LE on Tuesday 18th August at 11.30am. Family flowers only, donations if desired to Cancer Research UK.

DEATHS Notices

MUIR - James Barr

Peacefully on 4th August 2026 in Buckreddan Care Centre, Jim Muir, aged 88 years. Devoted husband of 60 years to Nan, father to Alastair, father-in-law to Helen and papa to Charlotte and Katie. Family flowers only and any donations if desired to Alzheimer Scotland. A Funeral Service to celebrate his life, will be held in Abbey Church, Kilwinning on Monday 17th August at 10.30am, followed by a burial at Redston Cemetery, Kilwinning at 11.30am, to which all friends and family are warmly invited.

NICOL - Archie

21st July 1944 – 27th July 2026
Beloved husband of Margaret. Passed away peacefully in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Glasgow on 27th July 2026, with Margaret by his side. Funeral service will take place on Wednesday 12th August at 12.30pm at Bishopbriggs Crematorium to which all friends are warmly invited.

To remember your loved one is to never forget them..

Call our friendly and helpful Family Announcements team on
0141 302 6000
or email them on
announcements@heraldandtimes.co.uk

DEATHS Notices

RAE - David

Passed away on Friday 24th July 2026. David, beloved husband of Margaret and also the late Janet, and a much loved father and papi who will be sorely missed. Funeral service will take place at the LDS Church, Glenburn, Paisley on Friday 21st August at 11am, to which all family and friends are respectfully invited.

YDE - Sheena Gauld (nee Dryden)

Peacefully on Thursday 16th July 2026, Sheena, loving wife of the late Eddie, adored and devoted mum to Kristian and Erika, mother-in-law to Kenny, cherished sister, aunt and loyal friend. Funeral service at Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium on Tuesday 11th August at 1pm, to which all friends are respectfully invited. No flowers please.

SCRIPTURE Text

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100v5 (NIV).

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FTSE down despite strong results from Diageo

THE FTSE 100 fell yesterday despite well-received figures from WPP and Diageo.

The index closed down 20.41 points, 0.2%, at 10,867.89. The FTSE 250 ended up 62.79 points, 0.3%, at 24,695.42, a record close, while the AIM All-Share closed up 5.35 points, 0.7%, at 787.13.

In London, fresh survey data showed the UK's construction sector remained under pressure in July, although the pace of contraction eased markedly.

The S&P Global UK construction purchasing managers' index rose to 44.7 in July from 38.4 in June, its highest level in four months and comfortably above the FXStreet-cited consensus of 41.5.

However, it remained below the 50-point threshold that separates growth from contraction, extending the sector's downturn to a seventh consecutive month.

All three major construction sectors recorded slower declines. Commercial activity proved the most resilient with a reading of 46.8, while housebuilding contracted at its slowest pace since October 2025 at 41.8. Civil engineering remained the weakest area at 38.3.

New orders also declined for a seventh consecutive month, though at the slowest pace since September 2025.

The pound traded at 1.3454 dollars yesterday afternoon, down from 1.3466 at the equities close on Wednesday. Against the euro, sterling rose to 1.1675 euro from 1.1663.

The bidding battle for easyJet moved a step closer

Brent oil for October delivery traded higher at 81.74 dollars a barrel, from 79.47 late on Wednesday.

In European equities yesterday, the CAC 40 in Paris closed up 0.4%, while the DAX 40 in Frankfurt ended 0.1% higher.

Figures in Europe showed retail sales were weaker than expected in June. According to Eurostat, retail sales volumes declined 0.3% in June from May. They had risen 0.4% in May from April, and a 0.1% rise for June had been expected, according to consensus cited by FXStreet.

Meanwhile, Siemens fell 4.5% after the industrial firm's increased guidance fell short of investors' hopes. The provider of electrical equipment now expects earnings per share of 11.20 euro to 11.50 euro for 2026.

But analysts at RBC Capital Markets said the earnings "uplift appears less pronounced than peers".

Stocks in New York were mostly mixed. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.6%, the S&P 500 index was 0.1% lower, but the Nasdaq Composite was up 0.2%.

The yield on the US 10-year Treasury stretched to 4.66% yesterday from 4.63% on Wednesday. The yield on the US 30-year Treasury rose to 5.20% from 5.17%.

Today sees the July US jobs report, including a non-farm payrolls print.

Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB, noted the market is expecting a reading of 80,000 for payrolls and for the unemployment rate to remain steady at 4.2%.

"Payrolls are always important, but they are taking on extra significance since the Fed has dropped forward guidance," she explained.

"If every meeting is a 'live' meeting, then a stronger reading could boost the chance of a rate hike, push up Treasury yields, increase demand for the dollar and potentially weigh on equities and risk sentiment. However, the reverse is also true. A weak reading for July payrolls may suggest that rates are on hold for the long term, and we could see a sharp reduction in September rate hike expectations, which currently stand at 54%," she added.

Back in London, another batch of earnings provided direction with Diageo, Admiral and Persimmon among the blue-chip winners.

Diageo rose 5.6% after chief executive Dave Lewis announced financial 2026 results and a keenly awaited strategic plan.

"This new strategy, executing with a new, more agile, competitive and cost-effective operating model, gives us confidence that we can return Diageo to a business consistently creating value for shareholders," Mr Lewis said.

Admiral rose 5.2% as it said early pricing changes in its motor division leave it "well positioned" for an upturn in the market.

The Cardiff-based home and motor insurer said it expects stronger second-half group profits versus the first six months of 2026.

Persimmon rose 2.9% after better-than-forecast interim results, although it stressed that market conditions remain challenging for housebuilders in the UK, with affordability constraints and build-cost pressures.

On the FTSE 250, WPP shot up 29% as it backed annual guidance after seeing a "sequential improvement" in its second quarter. WPP was relegated from the FTSE 100 for the first time after nearly 30 years in December 2025.

Elsewhere, the bidding battle for easyJet moved a step closer to ending as the budget airline accepted an offer from Apollo after rival suitor Castlelake withdrew from the race.

The biggest risers on the FTSE 100 were Diageo, up 91.5p at 1,732.5p, Admiral Group, up 194.0p at 3,900.0p, Vodafone, up 4.9p at 119.3p, Metlen Energy & Metals, up 1.6p at 50.0p and Persimmon, up 32.5p at 1,155.5.

The biggest fallers on the FTSE 100 were Tritax Big Box REIT, down 7.2p at 164.5p, Relx, down 112.0p at 2,603.0p, IG Group, down 38.0p at 1,312.0p, Melrose Industries, down 13.7p at 477.2p, and Rolls-Royce, down 37.0p at 1,533.4p.

Today's UK corporate calendar has half year results from Renewables Infrastructure Group.

CLOSING PRICES

Company	Price	Var	Year High	Year Low
3i Group	2871	-51	4459	2082
3i Infrastructure	384 ½	+1	393 ½	326
4imprint	5000	+110	5000	3055
Aberdeen Group	251 ⅝	-2 ¾	261	182
Aberforth Smlr Cos	1708	-6	1756	1418
Abrdn Diversified	12 ¼		49 ⅛	12 ¼
Admiral Gp	3900	+194	3934	2644
Airtel Africa	332	+5	420 ¼	207
AJ Bell	599 ½	-6 ½	643	414 ⅜
Alfa Financial	165		248 ½	142 ⅜
Alliance Witan	1383	-3	1386	1188
Allianz Tech	712	-8	758	445 ½
Anglo American	3976	-45	4225	2123
Antofagasta	3974	-76	4455	2024
AO World	97 ⅜	-½	113 ¼	83 ⅜
Ashmore Gp	219 ⅝	+2 ⅝	266 ¾	153 ½
Ashoka India	256 ½	-1 ½	285 ½	217
ASOS	387 ½	+11 ½	389 ¾	206 ½
Aston Martin	34 ⅛	-⅛	86	34 ⅛
AstraZeneca	11850	-186	15542	10922
Auction Tech	456 ¾	-4 ⅝	483 ¾	263
Autotrader Group	511 ¾	-8 ¼	826 ¾	427 ¼
B&M	234 ⅜	+2 ¼	264 ⅛	155 ¼
Babcock Intl Grp	1190	+4 ½	1502	921
BAE Systems	2200	+44	2331	1609 ½
Baillie Gif Japan	1080	+10	1080	834
Baillie Gifford US	312 ½	-6	366 ½	261 ½
Balfour Beatty	878 ½	-1	899	553
Baltic Classifieds	197 ½	-13 ¼	355 ½	170 ¾
Bankers InvTst*	152 ⅝		152 ¾	121 ¾
Barclays	520	-7 ½	530 ⅜	357 ¾
Barr (AG)	610	-5	710	598
Barratt Redrow	319 ¾	+4 ⅝	409 ⅜	241 ¼
Beazley	1291	+1	1296	769
Bellway	2098	+14	2868	1715
Berkeley Gp Hldgs	3592	+8	4434	3104
BH Macro	421	+4 ½	462 ½	388
BH Macro (USD)	4 ¼	+	4 ⅝	4
Big Yellow Gp	907	-2 ½	1180	812
Biopharma Credit	73	+¾	74	66 ⅞
BlackRock Greater Eur IT	611	+5	624	516
BlackRock Smaller Co*	279 ½	+3	354 ½	66 ⅛
BlackRock Wld Mining	952	-4	1046	555
Bloomsbury*	644	+7	672	438 ½
Bodycote	914	-9	930 ¾	601
BP	519 ¾	+4 ¾	606 ¼	410 ½
Breedon	345 ⅝	+1 ⅝	377	273
Bridgepoint Group	337 ⅜	-4 ¼	348 ¾	222 ⅝
British Land	441 ¾	-6 ¼	448 ¼	321 ¼
Brunner Inv Tr*	1556	-16	1572	857
BT Gp	200	-1 ¼	239 ½	2
Bunzl	2832	+8	2832	1989
Burberry Gp	1195	-14	1360	1004 ½
Bytes Tech	420	+3 ¾	427 ¼	253 ⅝
Caledonia Inv*	388	+1 ½	391 ½	312
Centrica	153 ¾	+2 ¼	218 ¾	151 ½
Chemring Gp	624 ½	-5 ½	630	460
City of London IT*	593		595	488
Clarkson	4990	-6	5155	3395
CMC Markets*	693	-4	749	206
Coats Group	85 ½	+2 ¼	95 ⅛	71 ¾
Coca-Cola	4916	-99	5170	3306
Computacenter	4884	+72	4930 ½	2242
Convatec	226 ¾	+3	256 ⅜	194
CPP Group	20		154 ½	13
Cranswick*	5210	-80	5690	4840
Crest Nicholson	63 ¾	-⅛	184 ⅞	61 ¼
Croda International	3281	-8	3322	2439
Currys	160 ⅞	-1 ¾	168 ¼	106 ⅞
CVS Group	1297	+8	1424	1114
DCC Energy	6375	-10	6407 ½	4350
Deliveroo	179 ¾		179 ¾	176 ¾
Derwent London	2054	-58	2146	1509
Diageo	1732 ½	+91 ½	2121	1362 ½
Dignity*	549		549	549
Diploma	7680	+5	7680	5015
discoverIE Gp	832	+9	836	514
Dominos Pizza	205 ⅝	-6 ⅜	220	167 ¼
Dr. Martens	82 ¼	+1 ⅝	99 ⅜	60 ¾
Drax Gp	718 ½	-1	918	626 ½
Dunelm Gp	888	-4 ½	1241	715
Ecora Royalties	149 ¾	+1 ¼	152 ⅝	69 ⅜
Edin Inv Trust	856	+2	860	760
Edin Wwide	240	-3 ½	290 ½	188
Endeavour Mining	3888	+46	5290	2434
Energean	725	-3 ½	1026	683 ½
EnQuest	22 ¾	+¼	27 ¾	9 ¾
Entain	537		938	521
Essentra	113 ¼	+5 ¼	113 ½	79 ⅞
Euro Sml Co.*	239	+1 ½	246 ½	197
European Opp	937		957	782
Experian	2830	-21	3982	2375
F&C Investment	343 ⅜	-⅜	351 ¾	82 ¼
Fidelity China SPE	264	-½	332 ½	245
Fidelity Emg	1430	+4	1562	836
Fidelity Eur	441	+3	441 ½	372
Fidelity Spec Val	470		470 ½	372
Finsbury G&I Tst	815	-2	915	713
Foresight Env	86 ½	+⅛	88 ¼	61 ⅞
Foresight Group	495 ½		496 ¼	345
Foresight Solar*	70 ¼	-1 ¼	88	60
Frasers Group	815	+2	827 ½	618 ½
Fresnillo	2738	-9	4448	1378
Games Workshop*	18940	-70	21940	14200
Gamma Comms	968	-2	1106	701
GCP Infra Inv	81 ⅞	-1 ¾	83 ¾	70
Genuit Group	302 ⅜	+5 ⅝	389 ½	243 ¼
Genus	2302	+42	3170	1966
Glencore	566	-7 ¼	615	284 ¼
Global Smaller	195 ¾	-1 ⅜	197 ¾	163 ⅝
Globaldata	84	+¾	151 ½	63 ⅝
Goodwin	18800	+20	27600	9100
Grafton Grp Units	1029 ⅝	+⅜	1029 ⅝	808 ⅜
Grainger	174	-¼	211	150 ⅜
Greencoat UK	115	-⅞	118 ¼	92 ¼
Greencore Gp	260 ⅝		306 ½	192
Greggs	1925	-8	2032	1418
GSK	1936 ½	+21	2268	1395 ½
Haleon	370 ⅝	+4 ⅞	410 ⅞	320 ⅞
Halfords	244	-1	250	127 ⅝
Halma*	3802	+2	4878	3210
Hammerson	375 ¾	-2 ⅝	385 ⅝	267 ¾
Harbour Energy	243 ⅝	+11 ⅜	318 ¾	185 ⅞
Harbourvest Glb	3430	-15	3472 ½	2730
Harworth	178	+34 ⅜	182	120
Hays	62 ⅜	+2 ¼	64 ⅝	29 ⅝
Helios Towers	197 ⅞	+2 ¾	245 ⅜	120 ¾
Herald Inv Trust	3035	-25	3260	2305
HG Capital Trust	391	-1	522	323
HICL Infr	138 ¾	-⅝	139 ⅜	109
Hikma Pharma	1699	+128	1851	1191
Hill & Smith	3090	+80	3107 ½	1968
Hilton Food Gp	612	+3 ½	849	456
Hiscox	1811	+20	1899	1273
Hochschild Mining	480	+⅜	808 ½	272 ⅝
Hollywood Bowl	291	-1 ½	307 ½	234 ½
Howden Joinery Gp	834	+1	970	723 ½
HSBC Hldgs	1521 ¼	+10 ⅝	1597 ⅜	938 ⅞
Hunting	447	+3	531	297
ICG	2028	-20	2332	1463
ICG Enterprise Trust	1468	+6	1600	1310
IMI	3130	+46	3130	2226
Imperial Brands	2759	+12	3341	2668
Inchcape	826 ½	-17	890	640 ½
Informa	905 ¼	-6 ⅜	993 ⅜	739 ¾
Integrafin Holdings	383 ½	+½	392	298 ½
Intercontl Htls	158 ¾	-1 ½	10585	128 ⅜
Intertek Gp	5840		5895	3582
Intl Cons Airl	446	+1 ½	488	342 ¼
Intl Public Prtnshps	144	-⅝	144 ⅝	117 ¼
Intl Workplace Gp	185 ¾	-3	249 ⅜	168 ¾
Invensys	509 ½		509 ½	509 ½
Invesco Asia Dragon	493	-4 ½	516	372
Investec	672	-3 ½	675 ½	518
IP Group	69 ⅜	+¾	70 ⅝	48 ⅝
Ithaca Energy	232 ⅜	+4 ¼	285 ⅝	153 ¾
ITV	73 ¼	+1 ¼	85 ¼	67 ⅜
JD Sports Fashion	93 ½	+¾	104 ½	65 ¼
Johnson Matt	2152	-2	2388	1765
Johnson Service Gp	149 ¾	-1 ⅛	170 ⅛	125 ⅝
JP Morgan Glbl Gth	636	-1	637	535
JP Morgan Japan IT	836	+5	839	659
JPM American*	1244	-4	1248	1048
JPM Asia*	576	+2	650	394 ½
JPM Emerging Markets*	163 ⅜	-1 ¾	180 ⅛	119 ⅛
JPM Euro Disc.	633	+1	663	557
JPMorgan EMEA	250 ½	+1 ½	301	196
JTC	1334	-2	1366	897
Jupiter Fund Mngt	162 ¼	-2	195 ¼	115 ⅝
Kainos Gp	904 ½	+11	1190	683
Keller Group	3080		3444	1282
Kenmare Resources	200	+2	337	180 ¾
Kier Gp	248 ⅜	+⅝	252 ½	180 ¾
Kingfisher	325 ⅛	+2 ¼	370 ½	243 ¼
Lancashire Hldgs	593 ½		694	565
Land Securities	713	-9	722	529
Law Debenture	1266	-2	1268	982
Legal & General	312	+6 ¾	312	233 ⅝
Lion Finance	12170	+150	12405	7020
Lloyds Banking Gp	114 ¾	-2 ⅜	117 ⅛	78 ½
London Stock Exch	8750	+122	9992	7170
LondonMetric Prop	195 ½	-2 ¼	215	177 ½
M&G	364 ⅛	-¼	366 ⅛	248 ⅝
Man Group	312	-4	316	154 ¾
Marks & Spencer	406 ⅜	-3	413 ⅜	308 ⅞
Marston's	52		68 ⅞	36 ⅛
ME Group	120 ¼	-3	216 ½	100 ¼
Melrose Ind	477 ¼	-13 ¾	681 ¾	448 ¼
Mercantile IT	285		285	237
Merchants Tst*	680	+2	690 ½	537
Metlen Energy & Metals	50	+1 ⅝	56 ¼	31 ¾
Metro Bank	173 ⅝	-4 ¼	179 ⅝	100
Michael Page	187 ⅛	-¾	272 ¾	103 ⅛
Mitchells & Butlers	283	+½	301	228
Molten Ventures	640	-7 ½	647 ½	349 ¾
Monks Inv Tst	1614	-24	1656	1372
Mony Group*	201	-5 ¾	213	144 ½
Moonpig	285 ¼	+2 ¼	285 ½	192 ⅝
Morgan Advanced	245	+5	252 ¼	187 ⅜
Morgan Sindall Gp	4468	+4	5530	4050
Mothercare	¾		3 ⅜	⅝
National Grid	1196	+8 ½	1400	1010 ½
NatWest Group	711 ¾	-2	722 ¾	505 ¼
NCC Grp	142 ¾	+⅝	157 ¾	113 ¾
Neuberger Private Eqty Partners*	1498	+8	1632	1302
Next	15715	+55	15800	11575
Next Energy Solar	50 ¼	+¾	77 ⅞	44
Ninety One*	222 ¼	+1 ⅜	259 ⅜	185 ½
Nth Atlantic Smlr	423	-8	431	330
Oakley Capital Inv	530	-4	576	169
Ocado Gp	210 ¾	-1	395 ⅝	159 ¼
Old Mutual	58 ⅝	-1 ⅜	77 ¾	51 ⅝
OSB Group	507	-62	643 ½	484 ¼
Oxford Biomedica	591	+17	913	430
Oxford Instruments*	2898	+26	3302	1766
Oxford Nanopore	118 ⅜	+1 ⅜	219	104 ½
Pacific Horizon	1090	-28	1252	654
Pantheon Infra	112 ¼	-⅜	119 ⅜	101
Pantheon Intl	399	+2	407 ½	323 ½
Paragon	830	-10 ½	926 ½	711 ½
Partners Group	634	+10	942	593
Patria Private	600	-14	642	536
Paypoint	602 ½	-4 ½	822	438 ½
Pearson	1229	-10	1326	891 ⅝
Pennon Gp*	464 ⅜	+6 ¾	600	446
Pershing Square	3904	-38	5090	3642
Persimmon	1155 ½	+32 ½	1543 ½	998 ⅝
Personal Assets Tr	552	-2	554	509
Pets at Home Gp	212 ¾	-⅜	236 ⅝	170 ⅞
Playtech	363 ⅜	-2 ⅜	436 ½	232
Plus500	3826	-90	5070	2942
Polar Cap Tech	669	-11	733 ½	388 ½
Polar Capital Gl	252	+1 ½	253 ¼	203
Pollen Street	845	+5	964	702
PPHE Hotel Gp	1526	-16	2060	1286
Premier Oil	243 ⅝	+11 ⅜	318 ¾	185 ⅞
Primary Hlth Prop*	95 ⅝	+	108 ¼	87 ½
Prudential	1027	+2	1220	916
QinetiQ*	547	+½	549 ½	406
Quilter	196	-6 ⅝	208 ¼	154 ⅜
Rank Gp	100 ⅜	+⅜	149 ⅝	88 ⅛
Raspberry Pi	694	+19 ½	1051	257 ¼
Rathbone Grp	1704	+12	2265	1582
Reckitt Benckiser	5248	-94	6681 ¾	4443
RELX	2603	-112	3625	2013
Renewables Infra	77	-1 ⅛	81 ⅜	63 ½
Renishaw	5165	-15	5455	2940
Rentokil Initial	363 ½	-5 ⅝	506 ¾	344 ¾
RHI Magnesita	3050	+15	3345	1980
Rightmove	469 ⅞	-6	788	404
Rio Tinto	7457	-54	8308	4448 ½
RIT Cap Partners	2615	+15	2615	1942
Rolls-Royce	1533 ⅜	-37	1570 ⅜	1026
Rotork	487 ¾	+1	490 ⅝	288 ⅜
RS Group	746 ½	+5	749 ¼	541 ½
Ruffer Investment	298 ½	+1	313 ½	283 ½
SABMiller	4498 ¼		4498 ¼	4498 ¼
Safestore Hldgs*	628 ½	-9	837	582
Sainsbury(J)	354 ¼	-1 ¾	360	295
Savills	976		1108	808
Schroder Asia	826	-2	888	600
Schroder Oriental*	449	-5	459	302 ½
Schroders	584 ½	-5	589 ½	361 ¼
Scot American Inv	565	-1	566	487
Scottish Mortgage	1364 ½	-15	1545	1028 ½
SDCL Efficiency	38 ⅝	-⅜	63	32
Segro	962	-9 ¾	997 ⅜	604 ⅜
Senior	292		311	164 ⅝
Sequoia Econ Infra*	86 ⅝	-⅜	87 ½	75 ¾
Seraphim Space	182	+1	273 ½	66 ¾
Serco	260	+17 ⅜	324 ¾	216 ⅜
Severn Trent	3116	+34	3280	327
Shaftesbury	144 ⅞	-1 ⅛	157 ¼	126 ¼
Shell	3315	+34 ½	3583	2562
SIG	8 ½	-¼	12 ¼	7 ½
Sirius Real Estate	101 ¾	+¼	111 ⅞	91
Smith & Neph	1098	-10 ½	1435	1073 ½
Smiths Gp	2677	-22	2746	2118
Soco Intnal	31 ½		31 ¾	19
Softcat	1992	+17	1992	1091
Spirax Group	7375	+30	7960	6060
Spire Health	235	+2 ½	249	142 ¾
Spirent Comms	198 ¾		198 ¾	194
SSE*	2376	+34	2757 ½	1612
SSP Group	212 ¼	+⅜	213 ¾	138 ⅝
St James Place	1117 ½	-18	1553	1053 ½
Standard Chartered	2195	-17	2248	1305 ½
Standard Life	934	+5	952	619
Sthree	271 ½	+1 ½	271 ½	137 ⅜
Supermarket Inc.*	86 ⅜	-⅜	88 ⅞	76 ¾
Syncona	108 ⅝	+2 ⅝	109 ¾	86 ⅞
Target Healthcare	113 ¾	+1 ⅜	116	92 ¾
Tate & Lyle	554	+½	569	329 ⅜
Taylor Wimpey	84	+1 ⅛	116 ½	74 ⅛
TBC Bank Group	4890	+32	5180	3640
TELECOM PLUS	865	+6	1892	710
Temple Bar	426	+6 ½	426	335
Templeton Emerg	312 ½	-4	350	197 ¾
Tesco	475 ¾	-5	501 ¾	406 ⅞
The Sage Group	1027 ½	+14 ½	1175	783 ⅝
TP ICAP	317 ¾	-27 ⅜	355	240 ½
TR Property IT	317	-1 ½	361 ½	295
Trainline	246	-2 ⅜	300	185 ½
Travis Perkins	663	-3 ½	714	507 ½
Tritax Big Box	164 ½	-7 ¼	173 ¼	133 ¼
Trustpilot	291 ⅝	-1	293 ¼	129 ¼
Twentyfour	108	+¼	114 ¾	104 ⅝
Unbound	¾		¾	¾
Unite Group	534 ½	-6 ½	745	448 ¾
United Utilities	1428	+11	1457	914 ¾
Vesuvius	392	+8 ¼	503	355
Victrex	816		825 ½	539
Vietnam Enterprise	714	-4	848	684
VinaCapital Vietna	430	-8	499	414 ½
Vistry Group	282 ¾	+10 ¼	736 ¾	224 ⅜
Vodafone Gp	119 ¼	+4 ⅞	123 ¼	84 ⅛
Volution	685	-4	712	562
W.A.G	100 ½		106	82
Watches of Switz	742	-3	801 ½	318 ¾
Weir Gp	2696	+8	3546	2274
Wetherspoon (JD)	810	-2	817	555 ½
WH Smith	442 ¾	+2 ¾	1355 ½	383 ¼
Whitbread	2528	+7	3274	2234
Wickes Group	202	-1 ½	255	170 ¾
Wizz Air Holdings	1110	-37	1447	849 ½
Wood Gp(J)	29 ⅜		29 ⅜	18 ¼
WPP	395	+87 ⅞	403 ¼	224 ⅞
XPS Pensions	340	+3	383	283
Zigup	463 ½	-1	471 ½	301 ½

* Ex Dividend

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Economic research, surveys and data will continue to highlight the grim everyday realities of Brexit Picture: Andrew Milligan/ PA

Burned meat pie and cold economic reality of Brexit

BREXIT has been firmly in the spotlight in Andy Burnham's early days as Prime Minister.

The Liberal Democrats delivered the following message for the Prime Minister via Facebook on Wednesday: "Andy Burnham must drop Labour's stifling red lines and forge a new relationship with Europe."

These red lines are, of course, those with which former prime minister Sir Keir Starmer painted himself into a corner on Brexit. Sir Keir pledged, in the run-up to the July 2024 General Election, not to take the UK back into the European Union, single market or even the customs union.

Sir Keir had plenty of warm words on Europe when he was prime minister, and at least this was a step forward from the ideology of his Tory Brexiter predecessors.

However, Labour's red lines prevent it from mitigating in any significant way the colossal damage arising from the two key elements of the Tory hard Brexit: loss of frictionless trade with the huge European bloc and the ending of free movement of people between the UK and European Economic Area.

Urging Mr Burnham to drop the red lines, the Liberal Democrats declared: "The single biggest lever that this government could pull to boost economic growth in this country is to get a better trading relationship with Europe."

This is surely the case.

The SNP, for its part, was rather more blunt than the Liberal Democrats.

It declared last Friday: "It's taken less than two weeks for the new Westminster Prime Minister to run into the wall of economic reality.

"Despite promising a shiny new brand of politics, Andy Burnham's grand plans are already colliding with the chronic, embedded failure of Brexit Britain.

"Expecting a new Westminster Prime Minister to fix a structurally broken UK economy without addressing Brexit is like going for a suntan on the deck chairs of a sinking cruise ship – it might be relaxing for a second, but you're still facing disaster."

And the colourful analogies did not end there.

The SNP added: "In 2016, Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU by 62% to 38%, across every single local authority area. Yet despite that clear democratic verdict, Westminster dragged Scotland out of the EU against its will anyway.

"It was the political equivalent of ordering the vegetarian meal at a restaurant, only for the waiter to slam down a burnt meat pie because the table next to you asked for it."

There is surely much truth in these analogies.

Moving away from the political cut and thrust, it is well worth observing that cold economic reports continue to highlight the problems of Brexit for business and the economy.

Much of the focus regarding Brexit's impact on trade has been on goods exporters, which is entirely understandable given the scale of the woe heaped on these companies by the Tories' folly.

A report published this week highlighted the challenges being faced by Scottish services firms as a result of Brexit.

Prosper, the trading name of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, worked in partnership with the University of Strathclyde's Fraser of Allander Institute on this report.

In a press release titled "Brexit barriers hinder international growth for Scotland's service firms", Prosper said the report "highlighted the extent to which exporters of services in Scotland face Brexit-related barriers to trading with key European markets".

It noted that research of sectors such as law, accountancy, the performing arts, architecture and engineering had been commissioned by the Scottish Government, and was based on quantitative analysis undertaken by economists at Fraser of Allander and insights from business roundtables in Prosper's "broad membership network".

Prosper declared: "Businesses say the loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications for accountants and restrictions on short-term business travel has limited access to the EU single market and constrained the growth potential of Scottish firms."

It goes without saying that this is a dismal situation.

Times are tough enough without major constraints arising from foolish political decisions.

Prosper noted that some companies, particularly in the fintech sector, reported that the UK's post-Brexit regulatory freedom had enabled greater innovation, boosting competitiveness and access to markets in the rest of the world.

However, it added: "With the EU the top destination of Scottish exports of financial, business and computing services and IT, the net result of Brexit has been improved access to less valuable markets outside of the EU."

This is an important point.

The EU is the UK's largest trading partner by a long way. This is hardly surprising, given the powerful bloc is on the country's doorstep. That said, this simple fact seems to be too often overlooked, with the desire of politicians to extravagantly trumpet trade deals with countries which are much further away not helping in this regard. Prosper also observed: "Businesses said that Brexit has made it harder for Scotland to be viewed as part of the European business ecosystem, with some international work now being coordinated through European Economic Area (EEA) countries such as Norway and Switzerland rather than from Scotland."

This is also a worrying situation.

Prosper noted services businesses "now account for nearly 41% of Scotland's international exports, up from around a third in 2008", underlining the importance of this sector.

Fraser of Allander director Professor Mairi Spowage said: "Scotland has an internationally competitive base of knowledge, expertise and specialist services.

"This report shows that the opportunity is substantial, but success depends on more than demand alone. Reducing regulatory friction, improving mutual recognition and helping firms build trusted relationships in key markets will be essential if Scotland is to convert its strengths into sustained export growth."

Sara Thiam, chief executive of Prosper, said: "Scotland has many strengths in international trade, with products and expertise valued by customers around the world. Exports from the services sector deserve greater attention, making this report particularly timely.

"The services economy is highly innovative, supports skilled jobs and drives growth across Scotland. While service exporters are less exposed to tariffs, they still face regulatory, mobility and administrative barriers that can limit access to markets and constrain growth.

"The Scottish and UK governments must better understand these challenges and ensure trade support reflects the needs of service exporters."

It will be interesting to see how Mr Burnham proceeds on the European front.

At this stage, it might be over-optimistic to think he will move to obliterate those damaging red lines.

In the meantime, economic research, surveys and data will continue to highlight the grim everyday realities of Brexit for individuals, companies and the economy.

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THIS SHOULD BE FRONT PAGE NEWS

Over 118,000 young people faced homelessness in the UK last year*

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*Figures taken from Centrepoint's Databank Report 2024-2025.

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*Based on Centrepoint's estimate that 118,000 young people aged 16-24 presented to their local authority as homeless or at risk of homelessness between April 2023 and March 2024.

*Figures taken from Centrepoint's Databank Report 2024-2025.

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New tax must benefit venues and performers, says Fringe stalwart

Josh Pizzuto-Pomaco

THE founder of one of the capital's premier theatre and comedy producers has called on Edinburgh's council leaders to ensure that tourist tax cash is "coming back" to Fringe performers and venues.

The 5% fixed-rate charge on overnight stays in Edinburgh came into force on July 24 following years of development and consultation.

Speaking at the annual Assembly Gala launch on Wednesday night, Fringe stalwart William Burdett-Coutts said: "You've no doubt noticed that there's a tourist levy in place now. I'm told by our part that we're putting something like £60,000 into that from Assembly. I would like to make sure the council starts putting some back.

"I think that has to apply to everybody in Edinburgh that has a love for this festival," he went on to say. "Whether you're a landlord or a shop or a business that benefits out of this, there needs to be a turn in direction of where the money goes.

"At the moment, this festival generates a fortune for this country. There was a recent study [which found] that the festivals generate £852 million for the Scottish economy. That alone is the most amazing figure. It's extraordinary."

By Mr Burdett-Coutts's calculations, Assembly, which he founded in 1981, hosts around 500,000 people throughout the Fringe, representing £100m in economic contributions.

However, he added: "I can tell you that, as a business, we just scratch along. It's very tough.

"And the same is true for everyone that works in this game. So there has to be turnaround. There has to be money coming back to people to support the work."

Last week, The Herald revealed that Fringe chiefs do not know how or when they would be able to apply for funding generated through the new tax.

Chief executive Tony Lankester told The Herald: "As of now, there has been nothing at all committed for the Fringe from the visitor levy.

"There are a lot of ideas on the table that have come through the council's culture committee.

"They are fine in principle, but what we have not seen are any numbers or commitments. There are no pots of funding with an opening date or closing date that you can bid for. There is no framework and no tangibility."

City of Edinburgh Council has been approached for comment. Council leader Jane Meagher previously said: "[The levy] will raise tens of millions of pounds a year for us to reinvest in everything that makes Edinburgh so special – benefiting everyone who lives in, works in and visits the city.

"It will help us to strengthen the services and public spaces we all depend on, while better managing the effects of tourism and major events."

Mr Burdett-Coutts also spoke about a new scheme brought forward by the major Fringe venues in a bid to lower costs for performers.

He said: "I've worked very closely with a lot of the other key venues under a thing called edfest.com. So we work closely with C Arts, Gilded Balloon, Just The Tonic, Pleasance, Underbelly, and Zoo, and we're all trying together to make things better for the festival.

"And on that front, we've started a new scheme this year with Edfest where there's no commission paid by companies that use the site. So you can buy tickets on Edfest.com and the companies with shows on there pay nothing.

"But what they do in return, because a lot of tickets get used up at the festival and not paid for, is commit 4% of their tickets to Love the Fringe, which is a scheme we offer to the public where they can double the value of their spend. That way, unused tickets get well used and the public start building up a good way of getting into seeing shows at a cheaper price."

Over the next three weeks, Assembly will be producing more than 250 shows across seven venues dotted throughout the city.

Featured shows include 27 Club, Yuck Circus, Prophets, and By A Thread.

Fringe chief Tony Lankester Picture: Gordon Terris

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is under way

Inside the new Broughton Street store

Edinburgh artisan cheese shop opens with exclusive varieties

Rose Moncur

A NEW artisan cheese shop has opened its doors in Edinburgh, bringing more than 50 varieties of cheese to the capital.

The Big Cheese has opened at 27 Broughton Street, offering cheeses from Scotland, the rest of the UK and continental Europe.

Around half of the cheeses stocked by the shop are not currently available from any other speciality cheese retailer in Edinburgh.

Alongside cheese, customers can browse freshly baked bread, crackers, chutneys, olives, wine, and books dedicated to cheese.

The store also plans to host tasting events.

The Big Cheese is owned by Neil Cunningham, who hopes the shop will become a focal point for the local community.

His team includes head cheesemonger Mia Cowie, who began working in the industry at the age of 17 and now has more than a decade of experience, alongside cheesemonger Aidan McKinlay.

For the launch, Ms Cowie has selected cheeses including Stithians from Cornwall's Lynher Dairy, St Cera from Norfolk, Pevensey Blue from East Sussex, and a raw milk Camembert de Normandie.

Mr Cunningham said: "We're super excited to have opened the doors to The Big Cheese, but we could never have imagined how many people have come out to support us so far.

"We want The Big Cheese to be far more than just an artisan cheese store. We want to create a relaxed and personal customer experience and a venue that will be part of local community life in the neighbourhood I call home."

Ms Cowie said: "We want cheese-lovers to have the opportunity to discover something extraordinary and, in some cases, be among the very first to taste a new creation.

"At The Big Cheese, discovery is as important as tradition.

"Our mission is to celebrate great cheesemaking and to bring the very best artisan cheeses to our community.

"Whether you're eager to try something completely new or searching for the finishing touch that transforms a favourite recipe, you'll find a carefully curated selection of exceptional cheeses in the store."

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Business Voices

A burned meat pie and the cold economic reality of Brexit

Ian McConnell: Page 22

Buckfast sales took a dip

Sales of Buckfast fall by £3m after tax increases

Brian Donnelly

THE distributor of Buckfast has said annual sales of the alcoholic drink have decreased.

The company that sells the Buckfast Abbey product said annual sales were down more than £3 million.

J Chandler and Company (Buckfast) said that in the year to March, turnover was down by almost 5%.

It pointed to "punitive duty increases".

The company said: "During the year under review, turnover decreased from £62.4m to £59.3m, a decrease of 4.97%.

"Gross profit percentage increased from 15.4% to 17.5%.

"Operating profit has increased from the previous year as a percentage from 7.9% to 10.2% and increased in absolute terms from £4.9m to £6m."

J Chandler and Company (Buckfast), which listed its number of employees at 23, set against 25 the year prior, said: "The macro business environment continues to be challenging combined with punitive duty increases on Buckfast Tonic Wine of +54% over the last three years.

"Encouragingly, margin improved in the year but turnover declined by 5%.

"I am very proud of the team and the approach adopted to achieve this set of results ensuring the continued long-term success of J Chandler & Co (Buckfast) Ltd."

The company's sales totalled £58m in the UK, compared with £61m the year before, with £560,000 against £605,000 in Europe, and £116,000 against £165,000 for the rest of the world for the prior period.

During the year, the company paid royalties to the Buckfast Abbey Trust, a registered charity that holds a non-controlling share of £2.9m, set against £3.2m the year before.

Buckfast said on its website: "The monks at Buckfast Abbey made a living by producing liniments and medicines.

"In 1897, the nephew of a French monk visited the Abbey, bringing with him a recipe for tonic wine.

"And so began the tradition of winemaking at Buckfast Abbey, using the secret recipe which has stood the test of time."

It said the drink "continues to be produced at Buckfast Abbey to this very day".

Club's award-winning pro golf shop is just champion

Kristy Dorsey

John Murray, left, and Andy Martin of Foremost Golf

FOREMOST Golf's 2025 Member of the Year, head professional John Murray of Moray Golf Club, has turned a once-cramped Lossiemouth pro shop into an award-winning retail and coaching hub at one of Scotland's classic links venues.

Its top individual honour for retail and business performance recognises the ability to run a modern, data-driven golf operation without losing sight of the game's traditional roots. Prior to the Foremost award announcement earlier this year, Mr Murray's refreshed business had already picked up Pro Shop of the Year at the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards, underlining how classic links can deliver a contemporary customer experience.

Speaking from his "office" which he describes as having one of the best views in golf overlooking the Moray Firth, Mr Murray spoke about awards, business plate-spinning, and why being a club pro is a lot more than just playing the game.

How long have you been at Moray, and what did you find when you first arrived?
This is my 18th season here at Moray Golf Club. When I first came for the interview, the old pro shop wasn't really fit for purpose. It was small, dark, no proper heating, hardly any natural light – basically not what you'd want for a modern golf operation.

It took us 15 years to get the new shop built, but we finally got there and it's made a big difference.

What's the reality of your job on a day-to-day basis?
We're very busy: there's the retail side of the shop, then coaching, club fitting, and all the other things that go into running the business. You're spinning a lot of plates – retail, merchandising, accounts, social media, marketing.

People sometimes assume it's just playing golf all day. If only that were the case. It's very much a business, not just a chance to be out on the course.

What does the Foremost award mean to you and the team?
It was a real honour. I've been close before – over the years I've been in the running a couple of times, down to the final four at one point, and I've been runner-up in one of their other awards. But the Foremost Pro of the Year is the overall award, the big one, so to get that was very special.

There are over 1,000 golf pros in Foremost Golf. Initially, we heard I'd won the Scottish region award, then they looked at the four regional winners and we found out I'd won the overall award. But the thing about winning awards is you can't do it alone. The Foremost award has my name on it, but I see it as recognition for everyone. Derek [Ramsay] has been with me 14 to 15 years, Alan [Currie] around 10 to 11. When staff stay that long, it suggests it's not a bad place to work.

When you redesigned the shop, what were the key changes you wanted to make to the customer experience?
We looked at everything: first, bringing in natural light. We now have a large window behind the counter, looking out towards the lighthouse. A lot of people comment that it's one of the best "offices" in golf – certainly one of the best pro shop views.

Space was also crucial. We needed room for golfers checking in and for people browsing. In the old shop, because it was so tight, browsers often felt they were in the way whenever groups were checking in. It was important that we had enough room without going beyond the budget.

We've tried to create a good flow. I've been very keen not to overstock just because we have more space. Even now you're tempted to add another brand, but you have to pull back and remember the original aim: a comfortable space and a good customer experience.

How have you approached stock, especially crested clothing, given Moray's mix of members and visiting golfers?
This time we decided to go almost entirely crested. Pretty much all the clothing carries the Moray Golf Club logo.

Visitors, especially overseas or from other parts of the UK and Ireland, generally like to take home something with the logo on it – it's a souvenir of where they've played.

We concluded it was better to commit to crested clothing and make it easy to order uncrested items if someone specifically wants them.

How do you use data to keep the business under control?
We use Foremost Golf quite a lot for our side of the business. We send out a weekly newsletter to members and general customers. Foremost provides an online booking system for all our coaching diaries, which links in with the tee-sheet. That lets us see at a glance when lessons and tee-times are busy and plan staffing properly for those days.

Overall, the data helps us be proactive rather than reactive – planning ahead based on bookings and tee-sheet patterns.

For someone thinking about becoming a club professional now, what would you say about the skills they really need?
I did a leisure and recreation management degree, and when I finished that I went to work at Gleneagles. A lot of what I still do today comes from that period.

All the way through my training I was quite realistic about my playing level. I always felt I'd probably focus on coaching or the shop side. That's important for anyone looking to get into it: talk to people in the industry.

What I enjoy is the diversity. It's never the same day. You have to be a people person.

New £6m Glenachulish whisky distillery approved in Highlands

Rose Moncur

A NEW £6 million whisky distillery has been approved for the Highlands, paving the way for a major tourism and jobs boost near Ballachulish.

The Highland Council has granted planning permission for the Glenachulish Distillery, which will be built beside Loch Leven and is expected to create seven permanent jobs alongside an estimated 30 additional roles across the wider economy.

Alongside whisky production, the development will feature a café, shop, tasting rooms, visitor facilities, a community space and a terrace overlooking the loch.

Production of Highland single malt whisky is expected to begin in 2028 using three copper stills, with visitors able to watch the distillation process through large windows overlooking the water.

How the new distillery will look

The project is being led by the family behind Creag Mhor Lodge and whisky bar Bar 1890 in North Ballachulish.

The distillery has been designed as a cluster of dark metal and timber-clad buildings with three chimneys, inspired by the Three Sisters of Glencoe and the three stills at the heart of the operation.

Construction is expected to begin in 2027, with the project delivered in two phases.

According to the Scotch Whisky Association, Scotland's distilleries welcomed a record 2.7 million visitors in 2024, generating more than £85m in visitor spending.

The Glenachulish project aims to strengthen whisky tourism in the Highlands while recruiting and training local people across distilling, hospitality and visitor services.

A spokesperson for Glenachulish Distillery said: "Every whisky carries the imprint of its makers and the place where its story begins – we want to put Glenachulish firmly on the Scottish whisky trail while bringing jobs and prosperity to our local community.

"Our ambition is to create a distillery with a distinct identity and charm that gives people another reason to visit, stay and explore the area, while offering a truly memorable visitor experience.

"The project will create permanent job opportunities, with the hope that the next generation of distillers and industry professionals will come from this community.

"We're incredibly grateful for all the support we've received throughout the planning application process, and to everyone who took the time to share their views, which have helped shape the proposals.

"We look forward to moving into the next stage of the project."

Links Lodge

Dental practice is sold for first time in 27 years

Rose Moncur

A MONTROSE dental practice has changed hands for the first time in 27 years as its long-serving owners prepare for retirement.

Links Lodge Dental Practice, on John Street, has been acquired by multi-site operator Dr Naga Narra following a confidential sales process managed by Christie & Co.

Housed in a 140-year-old former merchant's house, the mixed-income practice serves around 13,400 patients and features eight fully equipped surgeries.

The clinic has been owned by Dr Iain Campbell and Dr David Gibb since 1999, during which time they expanded the premises, modernised its facilities and grew the practice.

The pair decided to sell as part of their retirement plans but will continue working at the practice in a clinical capacity.

The acquisition marks Dr Narra's fourth dental practice. He plans to build on the practice's reputation by maintaining its standard of care while introducing additional treatments, including dental implants, orthodontics and facial aesthetics.

The sale price has not been disclosed.

Dr Iain Campbell and Dr David Gibb, former owners of Links Lodge Dental Practice, said: "We acquired Links Lodge Dental Practice in 1999 and have spent the last 25 years growing and investing in the business, expanding the premises, modernising facilities, and building a strong team to support an ever-growing patient base.

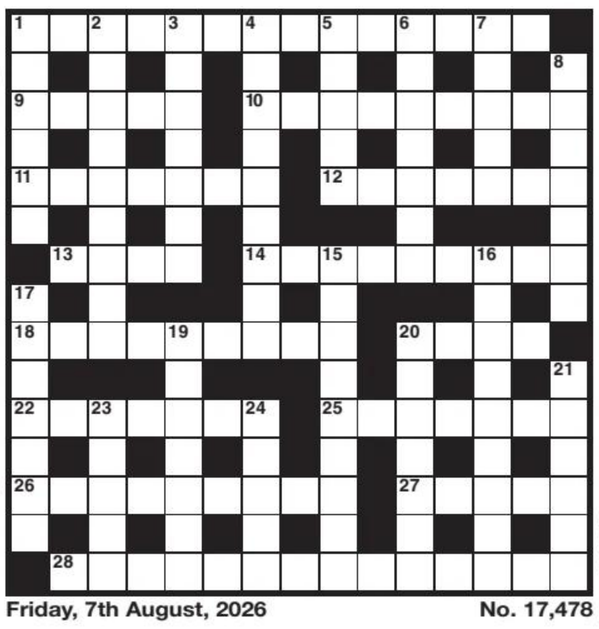
"Following a rewarding and successful period of ownership, we feel the time is right to pass the practice on to new owners who can build on the strong foundations we have created.

"We are immensely proud of what has been achieved and hope the practice continues to thrive, providing excellent patient care while embracing future opportunities for growth and innovation."

Dr Naga Narra said: "I was attracted to Links Lodge Dental because of its excellent reputation, loyal patient base, strong community presence, and clear potential for future growth. My aim is to build on the solid foundations already in place by maintaining the high standard of care."

The Herald crosswords

More puzzles on Page 18



Friday, 7th August, 2026 — No. 17,478

ACROSS

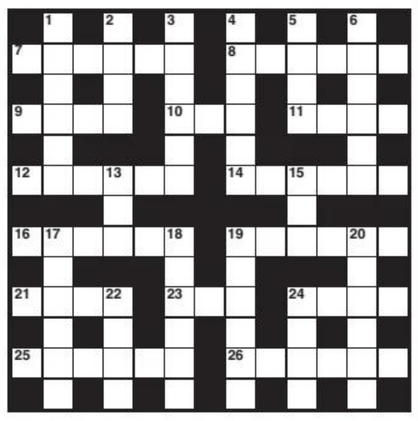
1 Service Hoffman provides is a nice campaign (5,9)
9 Boundary – a doctor needs it (5)
10 This vicar could be record holder (9)
11 Taught to cook trout by journalist (7)
12 Dallies changing its role (7)
13 Jack, perhaps, is quite a character (4)
14 A number score a dozen more (6-3)
18 Carefully kept convinced to step outside (9)
20 Oh dear, flops after doctor leaves (4)
22 Without being idle, don't start (7)
25 Lab lent out for a game (7)
26 Wandering Arab's lost bird (9)
27 Unsteady on these mountains (5)
28 Occasional hard worker? (6,8)

DOWN

1 Talkative traveller's first inside new yacht (6)
2 Judge artist climbing with some speed (9)
3 Aged tram due, broken (7)
4 Swindler of German wife and daughter getting rest cure (9)
5 Hear Roman forty do really well (5)
6 Comedy sketch about student providing route to the top? (3,4)
7 I love exotic delicate fabric (5)
8 Avocado starter, strangely, is hot; duck is cold, from what we hear (7)
15 Ones entering country, Asian republic (9)
16 Person doing the hot (and maybe cold) shoe shuffle? (3,6)
17 Rest all shimmering like stars (7)
19 Pressing therapy at sushi place (7)
20 Lake oration translated (7)
21 Soft coat for sportsperson (6)
23 Horse painter, one with a hood? (5)
24 Develop large menacing sound (5)

ACROSS

7 Sharp blow (6)
8 Life-prolonging liquor (6)
9 Active, nimble (4)
10 Of advanced years (3)
11 Faculty head (4)
12 Show off (6)
14 Company creep! (3-3)
16 Public oration (6)
19 Anxiety, disquiet (6)
21 Flat, thin, circular object (4)
23 Short-winged coastal bird (3)
24 Psyche (4)
25 Small jewellery case (6)
26 Involve (6)



DOWN

1 Place of worship (6)
2 On guard, cautious (4)
3 Prolong (3,3)
4 Period of vigour (6)
5 Considerate, caring (4)
6 Loud chirping insect (6)
13 Operate (3)
15 Container for return mail (inits) (3)
17 Original (6)
18 Well-being (6)
19 Maintenance cost (6)
20 Lacking in sense or learning (6)
22 Form of fuel (4)
24 Badger's earth (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

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M	A	L	A	I	S	E			S	E	T	U	P	
P				N		E				E				
		S	A	G	E	G	R	E	E	N				
		A				R		L				F		
R	A	N	C	H		O	V	E	R	D	U	E		
A		C		A		U		C		O		A		
C	I	T	I	Z	E	N		T	I	G	H	T		
Y		U		E		D		O		M				
		M	I	L	L	S	T	R	E	A	M			

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